

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 7 February 2007 at the Coleraine campus

PRESENT

Professor D A McAlister (Chair), Professor N D Black, Dr E Boyle, Miss C Cochrane, Mrs H Farley, Mr P Fleming, Professor J G Gillespie, Dr P Hanna, Dr D A Heenan, Professor D Hunter, Professor R Hutchinson, Dr D A Heenan, Ms P Kane, Professor E M Lillie, Dr P J Lundy, Mr D McGivern, Mr T McLernon, Professor R J Millar, Professor A Moran

APOLOGIES

Professor J M Allen, Professor R R Barnett, Ms L McMaw, Mr L McCurry, Professor C W Mulholland, Ms M C M Roulston, Professor R Welch

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs C G Avery, Mr H Deighan (for minute 07.23), Mr A G Faulkner

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

07.1 MEMBERSHIP

The Committee noted that Dr Boyle, Dr Lundy and Ms Roulston had been appointed as members of the Committee by Senate (min 06.261 refers). Dr Boyle and Dr Lundy were welcomed to their first meeting of the Committee.

MINUTES

- 07.2 The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2006 were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

07.3 Progression from FdSc Sport, Exercise and Fitness (Min 06.260)

At the October meeting the Committee had approved departure from the 2 + 2 progression model in respect of the FdSc Sport, Exercise and Fitness up to the 2007/8 academic year, subject to the Faculty providing clarification of selection arrangements. The Chair reported that, as requested by the Committee at its December meeting, the Faculty had now confirmed that the 60% progression standard corresponded to the new, lower, Year 1 entry tariff standard of ABB for the Honours degree programme.

07.4 Studies Advice (Min 06.275)

The Committee noted that a report on the Studies Advice System (Wharton project) was still outstanding from Dr C Curran. The Chair would write to

Dr Curran to seek clarification as to when the Committee might expect to receive the report.

07.5 Course Representatives: Role Description (Min 06.295)

At the December meeting the Committee had suggested a number of amendments to the role description for course representatives. The Chair reported that Ms McMaw had incorporated these into the revised role description in Paper TLC/07/1.

07.6 Dates of Semesters (Min 06.299)

The Committee noted that Senate at its meeting on 31 January had endorsed the Committee's recommendations for revised dates for 2011/12 and for rules governing the end of semester 1 teaching and consequent start of the academic year.

#### CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

07.7 University Visiting Professor

The Committee noted that Chair's action had been taken on behalf of Senate to approve the appointment of Professor David Boud, Professor of Workplace and Organisational Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney, as a Visiting Professor.

07.8 Consideration of QAA 'Causes for Concern'

The Committee noted that the QAA had written to advise HEIs and FECs in England of future arrangements to deal with any 'causes for concern' about the academic quality and standards of higher education that may emerge between routine institutional audits or equivalent procedures in FECs. The power to declare a possible 'cause for concern' would be limited to a group of named organisations, mainly professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. QAA would investigate any 'cause for concern' in a phased and proportionate manner, beginning with an informal enquiry with the possibility of a full investigation in serious or complex cases.

The Chair reported that there was a strong possibility that the procedures would be extended to Northern Ireland through DEL's service level agreement.

07.9 QAA Liaison Meeting (17.1.07)

The Chair reported that a meeting had recently been held between QAA, DEL and the two universities at which it was noted that the QAA were currently undertaking 15 pilot Integrated Quality and Enhancement Reviews (IQERs) in FE colleges in England with a view to full implementation of the review method from Autumn 2007. The outcome of the pilots would affect the review method for HE standards in FE in Northern Ireland which was currently undertaken by the Education and Training Inspectorate.

It was noted that HEFCE's agenda, which might influence the focus of future QAA reviews, was on quality assurance for work-based learning particularly in relation to employer engagement and the extent to which employers had an input to assessment. There was also likely to be more emphasis on quality enhancement and on the extent to which institutions were working effectively with the student body, including student representation and feedback arrangements.

07.10 QAA Mid-Cycle Institutional Review

The Committee noted that the QAA would be completing its mid-cycle review of the University by June 2007. This would require submission of a brief update since the audit of November 2004.

07.11 InnoUniLearning Report

The Chair reported that the University had received the draft report of a major EU-funded project (InnoUniLearning) which aimed to foster innovative e-learning strategies across Europe through the dissemination of best-practice case studies. The project team had developed a comprehensive list of over 85 HEIs across Europe with e-learning programmes. They had shortlisted 25 institutions with noteworthy programmes and focused on eight key case studies, of which the University of Ulster was one.

The report clearly showed how far the University has developed in this area over the past five years.

07.12 COURSE APPROVAL SUB-COMMITTEE

The Chair presented the report of the meeting held on 11 January 2007 (TLC/07/2).

07.13 Course Approval (Item 1)

The Committee noted the revisions (Annex to Appendix 1) approved by Faculties and course and subject strand withdrawals.

In relation to the revalidation of Unit 5D: Business and Management (undergraduate/Magee), the Committee noted that new strands in Economic Studies and Management Studies had been introduced. A high retention rate of 92% and exemplary performance had been noted by the panel and a Working Group had been set up by the Dean to consider, through the ASM exercise, the excellent progression and achievement statistics. The Chair asked that any good practice identified should be disseminated.

The Committee noted that the revalidation panel had not approved proposed optional placement and study abroad years in Level 2 of the degrees in Business Studies and Business Finance and Investment offered by BIFHE. Further consideration would need to be given to such matters as risk management, the quality of the student experience and quality assurance and support arrangements. The Committee also noted that the general financial terms of the recognition agreement with the Institute allowed the application of any new fees

schedule arising from the Value for Money Study, but the University had yet to determine this and the date of introduction.

The Committee noted that the revalidation panel for Subject Unit 3B1: Biosciences (postgraduate) had recommended re-approval of the Postgraduate Diploma/MSc Biotechnology and the Postgraduate Diploma/MSc Food Biotechnology (joint cases with the University of Patras and University of Ioannina) for the full period, but restricted the Postgraduate Diploma/MSc Bioinformatics to two further years initially, given the low intake size and concerns regarding the quality of the student experience. If, however, the Faculty produced evidence of increased recruitment, the Sub-Committee would give consideration to a request from the Faculty for a three year extension to the period of approval.

#### 07.14 Outstanding Documentation (Item 2)

The Committee noted that good progress had been made in the submission and approval of outstanding final documents from past evaluations.

AGREED that it be recommended to Senate:

- i) that the recommendations regarding course approval be endorsed as set out in the Appendix;
- ii) that extensions to the periods of approval be granted for the following provision:

##### To include 2007 Intake

CertHE/AB Fine and Applied Arts at Limavady College

##### To include 2008 Intake

American Studies (Single Honours/Major/Main/Minor)  
International Politics (Single Honours/Major/Main/Minor)  
Postgraduate Diploma/MA American Studies  
Postgraduate Diploma/MA Local History  
Postgraduate Diploma/MA Peace and Conflict Studies  
MSc Physiotherapy

#### 07.15 FACULTY HEADS OF COLLABORATIVE COURSES FORUM

Dr Hanna presented the report of the annual open meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 10 January 2007 (TLC/07/3).

#### 07.16 Chairing Boards of Examiners (Item 1)

It was noted that the partner institutions had agreed to continue to provide in-house training to staff in the chairing of boards of examiners and to maintain and forward to the University a list of trained staff.

07.17 External Examiner Reports (Item 1)

The Committee noted that, although external examiner reports were forwarded by the University to partner institution Directors/Principals and Course Directors, some Course Directors did not appear to receive these. The University's central list of Course Directors was being reviewed. The Committee was asked to consider adding the HE Coordinator in each institution to this list in order to improve the situation.

AGREED: that Academic Registry be asked to add the designated HE co-ordinators to the circulation list for external examiner reports.

07.18 Late Submission of Coursework (Item 1)

The Committee noted that partner institutions had been reminded of University policy on dealing with the late submission of coursework, ie that late work should receive a zero mark unless the student can produce acceptable evidence of extenuating circumstances.

07.19 Online Forum

Dr Hanna reported that over 50 colleagues had now registered for the Online Forum.

07.20 Entry Criteria for Students with Life and Work Experience and Equivalence of Key/Essential Skills and GCSE (Items 1 and 4)

The Committee noted that the question of the equivalence of key/essential skills and GCSE and the entry requirements for Foundation Degrees had been referred to ADSSC and the University's Standing Group on Entry Qualifications for consideration.

07.21 Plagiarism (Item 7)

The Committee noted that the reported view of the Forum and partner institutions that it was more important to promote academic integrity than to police students' activities did not fully convey members' recognition of the need for both aspects in order to comply with University policy. It was considered critical that students received advice on both referencing techniques and plagiarism as part of their induction. Clear understanding would help reduce malpractice.

07.22 Access to WebCT by Staff at Partner Institutions (Item 14)

The Committee noted that in relation to WebCT, Professor Mulholland had drafted a University access policy. In addition, it was noted that Senate at its last meeting had considered a paper clarifying the arrangements for individuals, not on the payroll, who are 'actively contributing to the work of the University' to be designated 'Affiliated Staff' and to be afforded a range of privileges (including library borrowing and electronic journal access). WebCT had not been specifically addressed. It was generally considered that full access to WebCT modules should not normally be provided.

## 07.23 FINAL RIGHT OF APPEAL WORKING GROUP

Mr H Deighan presented the report of the Working Group on the Right of Appeal of Students at Partner Institutions (TLC/07/4).

The Committee noted that the status of students of partner institutions had been identified as a matter which required consideration following the University's Themed Audit of Student Complaints and Academic Appeals arrangements in collaborative partners in 2006. Even with the adoption by partner institutions of the University's guidance on academic appeals procedures, it had been suggested that the University might still not be fully discharging its responsibilities to students of partner institutions. The Committee and Senate at meetings in October 2006 had consequently agreed that a Working Group be set up to consider the question of students' final right of appeal to the University.

The Working Group had noted that section 2 (Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning) and section 5 (Academic Appeals and Student Complaints) of the QAA Code of Practice were not prescriptive on the status of students or rights of appeal. Legal advice from the University's solicitors in 2002 had confirmed that there were no requirements under the Code for a right of appeal to the awarding institution for students of partner organisations.

The Committee noted that the Group had given careful consideration to the implications of extending the appeals process to include a final right of appeal to the University. The Group acknowledged that the Code of Practice called for clarity in the respective responsibilities of the awarding body and its partner institutions and the explicit communication of these responsibilities to students.

Whilst the University's arrangements for its own students allowed ultimate recourse to the Visitor, it was noted that students of local partners had a final right of appeal to the Ombudsman. A further alternative route through the University would be confusing and inappropriate. The Working Group had also noted that the current Code of Practice had excluded consideration of the question of an independent external element 'because of legal difficulties that some institutions would face in binding themselves to accept the outcomes of independent review'.

The Committee noted that the Working Group had found no grounds for affording students of partner institutions a final right of appeal to the University and had recommended:

- a) that it be reiterated that students of partner institutions should have appropriate rights of appeal through their own institution and that these procedures be contained and supported within the legal and governance structures of that institution;
- b) that the University had obligations to take all reasonable steps to ensure that partner institutions maintain appeals procedures compliant with HE provision;
- c) that, in furtherance of Precept A26 of the QAA Code of Practice, the University should ensure firstly that its own responsibilities and those of its

partners are clearly distinguished and advertised and secondly, that information is made available to prospective students and those registered on a collaborative programme about appropriate channels for particular concerns, complaints and appeals. This information should appear in both University literature, in particular the Guide to Collaborative Provision in Programmes of Study, and partner institution literature ie Course and Student Handbooks, and on respective web sites.

The Chair advised members that, whilst the Group had focussed on local partner institutions, there was a need for the University to give particular consideration to arrangements for students of overseas partner institutions. If the opportunity for final appeal to an independent external body, such as the Ombudsman as for local NI students, was not available for overseas students, then it would be important that student literature makes it explicit that no right of appeal outside the institution existed.

AGREED:

- i) that it be recommended to Senate that:
  - a) the three recommendations above be endorsed;
  - b) that, where the opportunity for a final right of appeal to an independent party does not exist for students of overseas partner institutions, then University literature and that of the partner institution should make explicit that there is no final right of appeal outside the partner institution;
- ii) that the Quality Management and Audit Unit be asked to confirm the arrangements in current overseas partner institutions.

## PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODY REPORTS

### 07.24 Education and Training Inspectorate

At its December meeting the Committee noted the generally positive ETI report for the Induction Module for Teachers in Further and Higher Education provided by the University (min 06.291 refers).

The Committee considered the Faculty's response (TLC/07/5) to the ETI report. The Quality Management and Audit Unit had reported that it considered the response to be satisfactory although the course would need to continue to evolve and adapt as the sector changes in the next few years.

AGREED: that the response be endorsed and forwarded to ETI.

### 07.25 Royal Institute of British Architects

At its December meeting the Committee had noted the report of the RIBA Visiting Board, which had approved BA Hons Architecture for Part One (min 06.292

refers). The Committee noted that paper TLC/07/6 was the draft Faculty response which had been sent informally to RIBA by the Faculty\*.

AGREED: that, subject to the inclusion of missing information and correction of typographical errors, the response be endorsed and forwarded to RIBA.

#### 07.26 Health Professions Council

The Committee noted the HPC Visiting Panel 'major change approval' report in relation to the BSc Hons Dietetics and the Postgraduate Diploma/MSc Dietetics programmes (October 2006) and the Faculty response to the Panel's conditions (TLC/07/7). The HPC had informally communicated to the Faculty that the response was acceptable. The Committee noted that a response to the Panel's two recommendations had not been provided.

The Faculty had, in addressing the conditions made by HPC, drawn up or made explicit three protocols and procedures for:

- a) the criteria for selection for the two routes within the programmes;
- b) obtaining student consent for participating as patients or clients in practical and clinical teaching (role-playing); and
- c) a system for approving and monitoring all practice placements.

The Chair proposed that the wording of some aspects of the consent protocol would benefit from review by Student Support and the Equality Unit. Advice should also be sought from Governance Services for confirmation of the legal acceptability of the consent form. The consent guidelines should clarify whether the consent was given on one occasion only or for each practical activity.

The Faculty of Life and Health Sciences was encouraged to consider the transferability of the protocols and procedures to other programmes in the Faculty in the light of the forthcoming joint HPC revalidation for other Health Professions programmes.

AGREED:

- i) that the Faculty consult with Student Support, Equality Unit and Governance Services about the consent protocol;
- ii) that, subject to the outcome of this consideration and clarification on whether the HPC expected a response to its recommendations, the response be endorsed and forwarded to HPC.

#### 07.27 Committee Consideration of Faculty Responses to PSRB Reports

The Committee noted that it often received responses separately from reports, which did not allow for informed consideration. The Chair proposed that in future

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\* The Faculty subsequently advised that the draft response had not been sent informally to RIBA.

PSRB reports and Faculty responses should normally be received by the Committee at the same time. Some concern was expressed that on occasion responses were being forwarded to the relevant PSRB directly by the Faculty without confirmation by the Committee.

Whilst acknowledging that PSRB reporting styles differ, it was also suggested that it might be helpful for Faculty responses to be presented in a tabular format.

AGREED:

- i) that the Quality Management and Audit Unit be asked to review the University's protocol for the management of PSRB relationships in order to clarify the arrangements for the conduct and reporting of PSRB visits and monitoring activity and subsequent communication with PSRBs;
- ii) that a risk-based approach should be adopted so that routine monitoring reports would not require consideration at University committee level but responses to PSRB accreditations, which were not part of a joint validation, should be approved at University level and forwarded through the QMAU;
- iii) that the QMAU give consideration to a standardised University format for responses to PSRB reports where the particular PSRB does not itself specify a format.

## 07.28 REVIEW OF QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

The Committee at its December meeting had noted developments in the national Quality Assurance Framework arising from a HEFCE review. These included the removal of summary external examiner reports and revalidation reports from a re-launched TQI website (min 06.296 refers).

The Committee received paper TLC/07/8 addressing two outstanding issues: the sharing of external examiner reports with students and the information on quality and standards which should be made public.

Members of the Committee had been invited to comment on the two issues. It was noted that a number of Faculties had not yet considered these matters fully in their committees.

## 07.29 Sharing of External Examiner Reports with Students (Item 2)

The Committee had previously agreed that the full external examiner report and the course/subject committee's response should be shared as a matter of course with student representatives through the Staff/Student Consultative Committee and/or Course/Subject Committee.

It was noted that the University did not require consultation through representation in such committees in part-time courses, where formal committees may be less practicable and in such cases an appropriate alternative method of consultation, such as meetings with students and WebCT discussion boards, was expected.

The Faculty of Social Sciences had responded that their part-time provision was covered by the standard full-time arrangements. The Deans of the Faculties of Engineering and Life and Health Sciences confirmed that full-time arrangements would normally apply in relation to the part-time provision in their Faculties. The Dean of the Faculty of Business and Management advised that part-time students were normally consulted at the end of a particular lecture/seminar and that the issues arising were usually recorded in the Course Committee minutes.

There was a general view that it would be preferable to share external examiner reports (and possibly PSRB reports) and course/subject team responses with students through a formal meeting in order that issues arising may be discussed and contextualised. Taking account of the NSS findings and the recent view of HEFCE (min 07.9 refers) the Chair emphasised the need for the University to be more proactive in seeking and providing timely and useful feedback from and to students.

Dr Lundy suggested that where Staff/Student Consultative Committees were established it was good practice for these to be open to all students on the course/subject.

AGREED:

- i) that Faculties give further consideration to the options for sharing reports with students in the broader context of staff/student consultation arrangements and in particular the possibility of the same consultative arrangements for part-time (including online) programmes as for full-time programmes;
- ii) that this matter be considered further at the next meeting.

#### 07.30 Information on Quality and Standards to be made Public (Item 3)

Members had been invited to forward their views on the nine areas of information on quality and standards which the Review Group had suggested be made public (appendix 2 of TLC/07/8).

It was noted that the University already made publicly accessible some of the information and other statements would be transferred from the existing TQI site. It was also proposed that a link be made from the University's website to the new TQI site.

The Student Handbook already contained summary statements about quality assurance policies and procedures, including programme approval, monitoring and review, and about assessment which would be made directly accessible from the home page. It was not proposed to make routinely available through the website the full detailed reports of PSRB visits or of internal validation and monitoring activity nor of internal surveys. Such reports would be available on request.

The proposals are set out below:

Institutional Context

Proposals

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | Sections of Corporate Plan                             | No change: accessible from University's home page.  |
| 2 | Statement of quality assurance policies and procedures | Add to University website this heading and direct link to section in online Student Handbook and links to relevant statements on Academic Office and QMAU websites. |
| 3 | Teaching and Learning Strategy                         | Add to University website this heading and direct link to full strategy and add summary statement previously located on TQI website.                                |

Quality and Standards of Programmes

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | Programme specifications  | No change: available in online prospectus (but see min 07.36).  |
| 5 | Procedures and outcomes for programme approval, monitoring and review | As 2 above. Detailed outcomes not to be published, as the University would only retain courses which continue to meet its standards.  |
| 6 | Details of accreditation from PSRBs                                   | No change: provided in online prospectus.   |
| 7 | Arrangements for assessment and external examination procedures       | Add to University website heading and direct link to section in online Student Handbook on Examinations and Assessment and add link to summary description previously held on TQI website. (Other specific information contained in course websites.) |
| 8 | Results of internal surveys   | Outcomes not to be published. Feedback is expected to be provided directly to students. Add to University website heading and direct link to Student Views section of online Student Handbook.  |
| 9 | <u>Links with Employers</u>   | Add to University website this heading and summary statement previously located on TQI website.   |

The Committee discussed the means of making such information publicly available and supported the use of the University's website. It was noted that the

'Prospective Students' site was likely to be the most appropriate within the current structure, but this heading would not capture all public-interest constituencies. There was also thought to be scope for developing the current 'Freedom of Information' webpage to make it more user-friendly by providing specific URL links rather than a generic reference to 'web pages' for accessing information.

AGREED:

- i) that the proposals for public information on quality and standards be endorsed;
- ii) that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Student Services) be asked to consider the facilitation of access through the University web pages to such public information for prospective students and other stakeholders;
- iii) that Corporate Planning and Governance Services be asked to review the University's Freedom of Information site in terms of accessibility of information;
- iv) that it be recommended to Senate that the Development, Communications and Marketing Committee of the Council be asked to take account of the expectations for public information on quality and standards, as proposed by the HEFCE Review Group and endorsed by the Committee, in the future development of the University's web pages.

#### 07.31 EVALUATION AND REVALIDATION

The Committee considered paper TLC/07/9 on the implications of the introduction of the new institutional-level approval and re-approval process (min 06.268 refers). The paper identified the proposed changes to be made to course evaluation and revalidation arrangements. A number of sections of the Guide to Collaboration in the Provision of Programmes of Study relating to evaluation and revalidation would be revised to remove consideration of institutional-approval matters.

The Committee noted that although there was potential overlap between the information provided in the Institutional Supplementary Document (ISD) as part of the institutional approval process and the Course Management section of the validation document, course teams would be encouraged at evaluation/revalidation to comment on how institutional arrangements were applied at course level. It was proposed, therefore, only to remove Section C5: Conduct of Examinations and Assessment as a specific heading in evaluation/revalidation documents. It would not be necessary to consider institutional policies on such matters as anonymity, security of examinations and plagiarism. The teaching, learning and assessment sections would still allow relevant aspects to be explored.

The Committee noted that ADSSC would be considering detailed processes for institutional approval and re-approval at a future meeting.

AGREED: that the proposed changes be endorsed and be reflected in the 2007 update of the Guide to Collaboration in the Provision of Programmes of Study.

#### 07.32 QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY: COLLABORATIVE PROVISION AUDIT

The Committee received the QAA's letter of initial findings from the November 2005 Audit of Collaborative Provision (TLC/07/10).

The Committee noted the broad confidence outcome in relation to the soundness of the University's present and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards made through collaborative arrangements. Five areas of good practice had been identified together with four desirable recommendations for consideration by the University.

The Chair reported that the University had recently received the draft report from the QAA for comment in regard to errors of fact or misconception by 12 March 2007. The first desirable recommendation, relating to removing ambiguities regarding the University's definition of collaborative provision and the public record of collaborative partnerships, had now been changed to an advisable recommendation.

The full report and University response would be received at a future meeting.

The Chair confirmed that matters identified by the University as part of the Audit preparation would be addressed to ensure there was continuing improvement and enhancement.

The Chair thanked all staff in the Faculties and partner institutions who had participated in the audit for their valued contribution and also Mrs Alleyne, QMAU, Mr Faulkner, Academic Office, and Dr Hanna, Chair, Faculty Heads of Collaborative Courses Forum for their work. Professor Moran expressed thanks to the Chair on behalf of the Committee for her leadership during the exercise.

#### 07.33 QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ASSURANCE OF ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: REVISED SECTION 6: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

The Committee received a commentary on the University's position against the revised section 6: Assessment of Students of the Code of Practice published in September 2006 (TLC/07/11). The commentary identified changes since the last edition (2000) and outlined how the University addressed the expectations of the Code.

The Committee noted that the Assessment Handbook (April 2003) was being updated to incorporate developments including those relating to internal moderation, plagiarism, APC/EL, regulations and examination procedures. Any matters arising from consideration of the revised section of the Code would also be addressed.

The Committee noted that the new edition of the Code had added 'monitoring' to the precept that expected institutions to have effective procedures for designing,

approving, monitoring and reviewing the assessment strategies for programmes and awards (precept 1). To assist in this, the Code suggested that trends in results might be analysed for example to consider mark, grade or honours distributions or to identify any relationship between student entry qualifications and assessment outcomes. The Committee acknowledged that current, largely manual and limited, exercises, were resource intensive and that the University might in the near future, through the introduction of the new Student Records System, be in a position to facilitate more analysis of trends. The Committee was very supportive of such a development, although it recognised the need to define and prioritise such activity.

Precept 3, relating to the encouragement by institutions of assessment practice that promoted effective learning, now made specific reference to the possible use of employers, patients and clients in providing part of the feedback to students on their performance.

Precept 9 related to the need for appropriate and timely feedback to students. The particular needs of students studying part-time and/or remotely were now highlighted. The Committee had already identified student feedback as an area which needed further improvement in the University arising from the results of the National Student Survey.

Precept 10 emphasised that everyone involved in the assessment of students should be competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

#### AGREED:

- i) that the University's policies, procedures and protocols for the assessment of students were compliant with the revised section of the QAA Code of Practice;
- ii) that Faculties continue to ensure that all staff remained competent through staff development and training where necessary;
- iii) that the facility to analyse trends would be valuable and its feasibility should be investigated further;
- iv) that the feedback section of the Assessment Handbook be updated to include specific reference to the role of employers, patients and clients, part-time and distance learning, and guidance about the point in the module or programme where it is no longer appropriate for a member of staff to continue providing feedback to a student on his/her work.

#### 07.34 QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

The Committee received paper TLC/07/12 relating to the new QAA Guidelines (July 2006) to assist institutions in the preparation of programme specifications.

07.35 Format of Specification (Items 2 and 4a)

The Committee noted the information that QAA suggested should normally be included in a programme specification and the information currently included in the UU template.

The Committee was asked to consider some minor revisions in the light of the new QAA Guidelines.

AGREED: that the proposed changes be endorsed and that the revised programme specification format be used from the 2007/8 academic session.

07.36 Validation and Publication (Items 3 and 4b)

The Committee noted that the validation of programme specifications was undertaken through the evaluation/revalidation process but that Faculties were responsible for ensuring that published programme specifications remained current and were updated in the light of any revisions.

Programme specifications for all courses had been published on the University's website in 2005. However, a random sample indicated that some specifications required updating or were missing.

It was noted that specific reference was made to the availability of programme specifications through the University's online prospectus in the Diploma Supplement documentation which accompanied student transcripts.

Faculties had already been asked as part of the ASM exercise to consider the currency, accuracy and reliability of information provided to students including programme specifications, student handbooks, and websites (min 06.298 refers) but it was thought that this might focus on current students. As online programme specifications were also intended for the information of prospective students it was proposed that a specific University objective for the 2006/7 exercise in 2007/8 should be a further specific review of the currency and accuracy of published programme specifications, in order to ensure that the University remained compliant with this part of the QAA Academic Infrastructure.

AGREED:

- i) that Faculties consider their processes for ensuring that programme specifications were published and maintained for all programmes;
- ii) that a review of the accuracy and reliability of information contained in online programme specifications be set as an objective for the 2006/7 annual monitoring exercise.

## VARIATIONS WITHIN UNIVERSITY REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

### 07.37 Revalidation Subject Unit 10a: Engineering

The Committee considered a case (TLC/07/13) from the Faculty of Engineering requesting permission to vary from the University's regulatory framework in respect of two programmes.

#### AB Engineering

At revalidation, the Faculty proposed that the final award classification continue to be based on all final year modules, ie one Level 1 and five Level 2, as had been approved at the time of initial evaluation, rather than the norm of Level 2 modules only.

AGREED: that, given that the programme was currently being phased out with the last cohort of graduates in the 2007/8 academic year, the variation be approved.

#### BEng Electronics, Communications and Software

The Committee noted that only two of the six first year modules involved assessment by a combination of coursework and examination, which varied from the University's norm for at least 50%. The BEng shared some modules with the AB Engineering, which had been approved for 100% coursework in year 1. With the phasing out of the AB, the Faculty requested that the current suite of year 1 modules continue to be offered until a new year 1, compliant with the University's standard expectation, was developed in 2007/8 for 2008 entry.

AGREED: that the variation be approved.

### 07.38 BDes Hons Communication and Design

The Committee considered a case from the Faculty of Arts to vary from the 50% rule (TLC/07/14).

The Committee noted that the BDes was a practice-based programme and that the proposed assessment of Level 1 by 100% coursework was common to all similar programmes offered in institutions of higher education throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland.

AGREED:

- i) that the variation be approved;
- ii) that the Faculty should monitor the outcomes from the assessment strategy in terms of progression and performance in subsequent years.

### 07.39 Undergraduate Honours Subject: Law (Major) (Jordanstown and Magee)

The Committee received a proposal from the Faculty of Social Sciences for an optional final year dissertation (TLC/07/15).

The Faculty considered that, with the constraints on student choice owing to the required inclusion by the Law Society of eight Qualifying Law Degree modules, it was preferable to designate the dissertation as an optional module so as not to deprive students from choice of specialist final year modules.

The Committee noted that, although the course team stated that students would have ample opportunity to undertake extensive research throughout the programme, detailed evidence of how the learning outcomes typically associated with a dissertation were met elsewhere in the programme had not been provided, in contrast to the subsequent proposal from the Faculty of Business and Management (min 07.40 refers).

It was noted that concern had been expressed by Research Graduate Schools that the increasing optional status or removal of undergraduate dissertations was having a negative impact on the number of students progressing to postgraduate research in certain subject areas. Dr Lundy also pointed to the difficulty of describing fully and accurately in learning outcomes terminology the valuable and distinctive learning achieved in undertaking a dissertation. It was therefore relatively easy to argue that the dissertation simply replicated the outcomes achieved in other final year modules.

AGREED: that, subject to a mapping being submitted to clarify that the learning outcomes typically associated with a dissertation were met elsewhere in the programme, optional status for the dissertation be approved.

#### 07.40 Undergraduate Honours Subject: Advertising

The Committee considered a case from the Faculty of Business and Management (TLC/07/16) for the omission of a dissertation module in the final year of the programme. The Committee noted that this was in line with the range of Business-related programmes offered by the Faculty at Magee campus and that detailed evidence had been provided of how the learning outcomes typically associated with a dissertation were being achieved in the six compulsory modules at Level 3.

AGREED: that the omission of a dissertation be approved.

#### 07.41 BSc Hons Food and Nutrition (Coleraine)

The Committee considered a CA3 proposal (TLC/07/17) from the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences in respect of a fully online final year module in a full-time undergraduate campus-based course. The Committee had previously agreed that no Level 1 modules should be delivered fully online in full-time undergraduate campus-based programmes and that the introduction of fully online Level 2 or 3 modules in such courses would require a special case to be made to the Committee.

The School of Biomedical Sciences proposed to pilot the module to demonstrate that a fully online (tutor supported) learning experience for level 3 full-time students could be provided which was equivalent in quality to the traditional face-to-face mode of delivery. This involved replacing an optional Food Safety

Management module with an online version which was offered in the recently validated distance learning top-up degree, BSc Hons Applied Biosciences. The change to delivery mode had been supported by the external examiner and the eight students who wished to take the module this semester. There would be some limited face-to-face introductory support available from the tutor.

AGREED:

- i) that the proposal be approved as a pilot for the current academic year only;
- ii) that the Faculty submit a report on its evaluation of the pilot for consideration by the Committee. The report should include feedback from the students and consider the impact on their experience of other modules in the semester.

#### 07.42 PROPOSED DELEGATED AUTHORITY FRAMEWORK FOR SENATE

Senate, at its meeting on 31 January 2007, received an interim report from a Senate Business Working Group which had been set up as a consequence of Senate's Self-Effectiveness Review last year. The Working Group identified the need to ensure greater strategic focus and discussion at Senate and the associated requirement to keep 'rubber-stamping' activity to a minimum.

In reviewing the functions of the Senate, the Working Group was of the opinion that the role of Senate should relate to the consideration of strategic academic matters. In relation to work which was undertaken in greater detail by its Committees, Senate should establish the strategy within which these Committees undertook their role, and monitor their activity and receive reports where activity was proposed or had occurred outwith defined strategies.

Senate had agreed that a draft delegated authority framework (TLC/07/18) be considered by its Committees before further consideration by the Working Group.

The Committee noted that much of the proposed delegation did not relate to substantial business. It had been proposed to delegate authority to Teaching and Learning Committee for the establishment of new prizes (6), the prescription of regulations and procedures for examination and assessment (9), instructions to invigilators (19), the discontinuation of students (23) and conditions to deem a student withdrawn (24).

The Committee noted that the guidelines for preparation and presentation of dissertations (8) should fall within the remit of Teaching and Learning Committee whereas those for research theses belonged to Research and Innovation Committee. It was also noted that some procedural matters in regard to examination and assessment were likely to be within the remit of ADSSC, eg timing of submission of examination papers to the Examinations Office, invigilation, and that consequently the reporting relationship between the Committees would need to be clarified if responsibilities were delegated as proposed.

The Committee noted that there were other matters which the Committee currently made recommendations to Senate which were not addressed in the framework, eg the approval of courses following evaluation and revalidation and dates of semesters.

AGREED: that Mr Faulkner prepare a response on the Committee's behalf.

Duration 3 hours

15 February 2007

AGF/CA/lh

## REPORT FROM THE COURSE APPROVAL SUB-COMMITTEE (11.01.07)

## COURSE APPROVAL (Item 1)

The Sub-Committee considered business from each Faculty and noted revisions approved by the Faculties as detailed in the Annex.

## FACULTY OF ARTS

CertHE/AB Fine and Applied Arts at Limavady College of Further and Higher Education

RECEIVED: a request from the Faculty for a one-year extension to the period of approval to include the 2007 intake.

NOTED:

- (a) that there was low demand for the programme and uncertainty regarding the future direction of the provision at this level within the new area college from September 2007;
- (b) that Limavady College was merging with North West Institute of Further and Higher Education where courses at a similar level were offered and that rationalisation was expected;
- (c) that the teaching staff at Limavady College were refusing to participate in revalidation activity due to industrial action;
- (d) that the external examiner's report was generally positive, as were the Annual Course Review and student feedback.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that the period of approval be extended to include the 2007 intake;
- (ii) that the programme be re-assigned to revalidation unit number 2F.

## FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

Revalidation Unit 5D: Business and Management (undergraduate/Magee)

RECEIVED: the report of the Revalidation Panel.

NOTED:

- (a) that there were no significant conditions or recommendations;

- (b) that the e-Business and Entrepreneurship Main/Minor subject strands had not been revalidated for 2007 and were withdrawn;
- (c) that new subject strands in Economic Studies and Management Studies had been introduced;
- (d) that there was a high retention rate of 92%;
- (e) the exemplary performance of the students and the good practice within the provision;
- (f) that a Working Group had been set up by the Dean to look at the excellent progression and achievement statistics.

RECOMMENDED: (i) that, subject to the condition of the Panel being met, the following provision within subject unit 5D be approved for a further period of five years (intakes 2007–2011):

Undergraduate Hons Subject: Business Studies (Single Hons/Major)

Undergraduate Hons Subject: Human Resource Management (Main/Minor)

Undergraduate Hons Subject: Marketing (Main/Minor)

Undergraduate Hons Subject: Accounting (Main/Minor)

BSc Hons Business Studies with Accounting/Human Resource Management/Marketing;

(ii) that, subject to the conditions of the Panel being met, the following subject strands be approved for a period of five years (intakes 2007-2011):

Undergraduate Hons Subject: Economic Studies (Minor)

Undergraduate Hons Subject: Management Studies (Minor);

(iii) that the Campus Co-ordinating Group at Magee consider possible new combinations for the Economic Studies and Management Studies subject strands and make proposals to APSC.

Revalidation Unit 5I: Business and Management – Level 2 at BIFHE

RECEIVED: the report of the Revalidation Panel.

NOTED: (a) that the provision comprised the franchise of level 2 of two programmes:

BSc Hons Business Studies (FT/PT)

BSc Hons Business Finance and Investment (FT);

- (b) that a number of areas of good practice within the provision had been identified;
- (c) that the Panel had requested more information regarding how Personal Development Planning had been integrated within the programmes;
- (d) that the Panel had expressed some concern regarding the information provided in the course document relating to the arrangements for the optional work placement or study period abroad leading to the awards of DIS and DAS and believed that further consideration needed to be given by the Faculty and the University to aspects of placement, such as risk management, quality of student experience, quality assurance and support arrangements;
- (e) that the Panel had recommended that the DIS and DAS not be approved at this stage and that BIFHE should liaise with the Faculty regarding the possibility of introducing these in relation to the full-time programmes at the University;
- (f) that the Faculty was to forward a recommended maximum cohort size for the part-time Business Studies (level 2) programme based on the resources available at BIFHE;
- (g) that the Dean was to be consulted regarding the Faculty's preferred timing of the revalidation of the level 2 BIFHE provision in relation to the University's provision in subject units 5A and 5B. (**Note:** Since the meeting the Dean has endorsed a four-year period of approval.)

RECOMMENDED: (i) that, subject to the conditions of the Panel being met, the following provision within subject unit 5I be approved for a further period of four years (intakes 2007-2010), in line with the period of approval for the University programmes in revalidation units 5A and 5B:

BSc Hons Business Studies (level 2) (FT/PT) at BIFHE – maximum cohort of 20 students (FT)

BSc Hons Business Finance and Investment (level 2) (FT) at BIFHE – maximum cohort of 10 students (FT);

- (ii) that the optional placement and study period abroad leading to the awards of DIS and DAS be not approved at this stage.

## FACULTY OF ENGINEERING

### Revalidation Unit 30E: Access – Computing

RECEIVED: the report of the Revalidation Panel.

- NOTED:
- (a) that the subject unit comprised the Access Diploma in Computing with Business and Multimedia at BIFHE (with Certificate exit award);
  - (b) that this programme was a combination of the Access Diploma in Computing and Business and the Access Diploma in Computing and Multimedia previously offered by the Institute and that all modules were compulsory;
  - (c) that the programme included a Certificate in Adult Learning exit award at the end of year 1, which was to be offered at BIFHE's College Square East campus, East Belfast Community Education Centre and the Footprints Women's Centre, but that second year modules would be offered at BIFHE's College Square East campus only;
  - (d) that the Panel had expressed concern that there was little distinction between the Access Diploma and the exit award in terms of learning outcomes and that the course team had agreed to revisit the learning outcomes to differentiate clearly between the awards and to revisit the module learning outcomes to make them more specific;
  - (e) that the core library holdings at all sites were to be revised in line with the Faculty's requirements and that the Faculty was to inspect and confirm the holdings prior to the commencement of the programme.

RECOMMENDED: that, subject to the conditions of the Panel being met, the provision be approved for a further period of five years (intakes 2007-2011) for a maximum intake of 50 students overall, with the following maximum cohorts at each site:

BIFHE (College Square East campus)	24
East Belfast Community Education Centre	18 (year 1 only)
Footprints Women's Centre	12 (year 1 only).

### Integrated Foundation Year for BSc Hons Computing (DIS) (with Diploma in Computing Skills exit award) (CE)

RECEIVED: the report of the Evaluation Panel.

- NOTED:
- (a) that this was a full-time programme starting in September 2007;

- (b) that the entry requirement for 2007 would be 120 UCAS points but that the entry requirement for subsequent intakes, subject to successful revalidation in 2007/08, would be 160 UCAS points;
- (c) that the Team had been asked to review the module descriptions to ensure that the content, learning outcomes and assessment were appropriate for level A;
- (d) that the Panel had requested that the revised document reflect the integrative nature of the assessment strategy, and that consideration be given to the wider cultural environment within which the skills of the programme would be applied;
- (e) that the Foundation Year modules would be designated as pre-requisites for entry to the first year of the honours degree for students progressing from the Foundation Year and that students would not be permitted to carry failed modules into the first year of the full honours degree;
- (f) that an Integrated Foundation Year programme was already offered at Magee and a similar proposal was to be evaluated for introduction at Jordanstown but that the curriculum differed at each campus.

RECOMMENDED: that, subject to the conditions of the Panel being met, the programme be approved for a period of one year (intake 2007), in line with the revalidation schedule for subject unit 16C, with an entry requirement of 120 UCAS points (to be increased to 160 UCAS points from 2008 [subject to successful revalidation in 2007/08]).

#### Course Withdrawals

NOTED: that the following courses had been withdrawn:

HNC Computing (Software Eng) at Omagh College  
 HND Computing at ETCFHE  
 HNC Computing at ETCFHE  
 HNC Computing BIT at ETCFHE.

#### FACULTY OF LIFE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

#### Revalidation Unit 3B1: Biosciences (Postgraduate)

RECEIVED: the report of the Revalidation Panel.

NOTED: (a) that the PgDip/MSc Food Biotechnology (full-time only) was a joint programme with the University of Patras and the University of Ioannina, Greece and that the

maximum number of students recruited in Greece was 10;

- (b) that the Agreement was based on reciprocity of teaching and operated without any exchange of funds between universities;
- (c) that Greek students registered with the University of Ulster in semester 1 and that UU students registered with the University of Patras in semester 2 but all students had full access to resources at each institution during their studies;
- (d) that students received an award from their home institution (not a joint award);
- (e) that the Panel had expressed concern regarding the quality of the student experience on the PgDip/MSc Bioinformatics programme as only two students had registered on the programme in 2006, but that the Team was seeking to address this;
- (f) that a new research pathway had been introduced in the Bioinformatics programme and that the Faculty was to make a case to the Teaching and Learning Committee for the inclusion of a 45-credit point Research Design module;
- (g) that some modules in the PgDip/MSc Bioinformatics programme were available fully on-line;
- (h) that the PgDip/MSc Food Biotechnology (PT) at Loughry College had been withdrawn as it had not had an intake.

- RECOMMENDED:
- (i) that, subject to the conditions of the Panel being met, the PgDip/MSc Biotechnology and PgDip/MSc Food Biotechnology (joint with the University of Patras and University of Ioannina) be approved for a further period of five years (intakes 2007-2011);
  - (ii) that, subject to the conditions of the Panel being met, the PgDip/MSc Bioinformatics be approved for a further period of two years (intakes 2007/08 and 2008/09) initially but, if the Faculty produces evidence of increased recruitment, it be permitted to seek a three-year extension to the period of approval (in line with the other two programmes in the subject unit).

#### MSc Physiotherapy

RECEIVED: a request from the Faculty for an extension to the period of approval to include the 2008 intake.

- NOTED:
- (a) that the undergraduate programme scheduled for revalidation in 2006/07 was changing from four years to three years in duration;
  - (b) that there were concerns regarding the current employment market and placement availability;
  - (c) that entry to the programme had been suspended in 2006/07 and that extension to the period of approval would enable the Faculty to plan for the 2009 intake, with the revalidation in 2008/09.

AGREED: that employability of graduates be an area of focus at the next revalidation.

RECOMMENDED: that the period of approval be extended to include the 2008 intake.

#### Course Withdrawal

NOTED: that the following course had been withdrawn:

BSc Hons Molecular Biosciences (CE).

#### SUBMISSION OF OUTSTANDING DOCUMENTATION (Item 2)

RECEIVED: a statement on the submission of outstanding final documents for 2005/06 and for earlier years.

- NOTED:
- (a) that 17 documents in total were still outstanding (2002/03: 1 document; 2003/04: 4 documents; 2004/05: 5 documents; 2005/06: 7 documents);
  - (b) that for 2004/05 two further documents were nearing completion;
  - (c) that a statement on progress in the submission of final documents for 2006/07 would be considered at the next meeting.

AGREED: that the Faculties continue to work to clear outstanding documents.

#### DRAFT REVALIDATION SCHEDULE 2007/08 (Item 3)

RECEIVED: the draft revalidation schedule for 2007/08.

- NOTED:
- (a) that the draft schedule had been sent to Faculties in November for comment by mid December following which there had been a number of further suggestions for changes;

- (b) that International Affairs (previously unit 14B) and American Studies (previously 13D) had been merged with History (units 14A or B [undergraduate or postgraduate]) whose revalidation was scheduled one year later in 2008/09 and that, consequently, the Faculty had been requested to present a case for an extension to the period of approval by one year, giving evidence of continuing good health of the following provision from the former units:

Unit 14A History (UG): American Studies (Single Hons/Major/Main/Minor) and International Politics (Single Hons/Major/Main/Minor)

Unit 14B History (PG): PgDip/MA American Studies, PgDip/MA Local History and PgDip/MA Peace and Conflict Studies.

[A case has subsequently been received and endorsed by the Chair of the Sub-Committee];

- (c) that a workshop for next year's Subject Unit Co-ordinators would be held in May/June subject to the timely return of CA6 forms.

AGREED: that, subject to incorporation of the suggested changes and further consultation with the Faculty of Engineering, and the Teaching and Learning Committee's approval of the following recommendation, the proposed revalidation schedule for 2007/08 be approved.

RECOMMENDED: that the period of approval for American Studies (Single Hons/Major/Main/Minor) and International Politics (Single Hons/Major/Main/Minor), PgDip/MA American Studies, PgDip/MA Local History and PgDip/MA Peace and Conflict Studies be extended by one year to include the 2008 intake.

COURSE APPROVAL SUB-COMMITTEE

11 JANUARY 2007

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**BA Hons Humanities (PT) NKIFHE (outcentre)**

To upgrade module AMS304J2 to level 3;

**BA Hons International Politics**

To introduce a new optional module in year 3 and to change the module co-ordinators of four modules;

**Undergraduate Hons Subject Strand: Journalism**

To introduce an additional module PHL306C2 in each subject and to change the title of MED515C1.

**FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT**

**PgDip/MA Advanced Accounting**

To introduce an additional optional module 'Sustainability in Business';

**BA/BSc Hons International Hotel and Tourism Management; BA/BSc Hons International Hotel and Tourism Management (NKIFHE); BA/BSc Hons Consumer Studies; BA/BSc International Hospitality Management; BA/BSc Hons International Travel and Tourism Management; BA/BSc Hons Leisure Events and Cultural Management; BA Hons Culinary Arts**

To revise the learning outcomes of the level 3 modules;

**BSc Hons Business (FT/PT) Undergraduate Hons Subject: Business (Major)**

To change the optional module 'Research Methods' (BMG410C2) from a level 2 module taught in the second semester, to a level 3 module taught in the first semester;

**BA/BSc Hons Business Studies with Computing**

To introduce the revised assessment strategy for module MKT520C2 in 2006/7;

**Master of Business Administration**

To introduce a new optional module in Strategic Quality Management;

**Master of Business Studies**

To revise the attendance expectations for the management development placement.

**FACULTY OF ENGINEERING**

**BSc Hons Mathematics with Computing**

To introduce module COM541J2 as a final year option.

## **FACULTY OF LIFE AND HEALTH SCIENCES**

### **BSc Hons Language and Linguistics**

To add module FRE122J2 to options;

### **BSc Hons Language and Linguistics Undergraduate Hons Subject: Language (major/minor) Undergraduate Hons Subject: Linguistics (major/minor)**

To introduce two new modules into the final year of the single honours degree and the Language and Linguistics majors and minors.