

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

FACULTY HEADS OF COLLABORATIVE COURSES FORUM

23 May 2007

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2007 at Coleraine.

PRESENT: Mrs M T Boyle, Ms R Fee, Ms C Guyer, Dr S Hagan, Dr P Hanna (Chair), Professor EM Lillie, Mr B McFetridge, Mrs J Mulholland, Ms U Quinn

APOLOGIES: Mrs J Alleyne, Professor N Black, Mr H Deighan, Professor D McAlister

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms C Browning, Mrs V Darragh (minute 07.108) and Mrs P McAuley (minute 07.108)

The Chair welcomed Mrs Darragh, Mrs McAuley and Ms Browning to the meeting.

MINUTES

07.86 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2007 were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

07.87 APL of English Language Entry Requirement (Minute 07.52)

The Chair advised that he had been in touch with Dr O’Kane, Head of Access and Educational Partnerships who had advised that all Step-Up students are required to meet the English Language entry requirement. It had also been noted at Academic Development and Student Services Committee that the terms of reference for the Standing Group on Entry Qualifications did not include consideration of English Language requirements and had agreed that this should be added to its terms of reference.

The Essential Skills Workshop had been held with three representatives from DEL in attendance. Members noted that DEL had advised that Essential Skills were deemed equivalent to GCSEs. Confirmation was awaited regarding the status of NICATS Math’s equivalences. Members noted that Essential Skills had been renamed ‘Fundamental Skills’ in England and Wales.

07.88 Access to the University’s Good Practice Database (Minute 07.58)

Ms Guyer tabled a paper clarifying the position with regard to access to the database by Collaborative Partners and members noted that access was

available on a read-only basis. It was agreed that staff from partner institutions who wished to include items on the database should follow the same method as used internally by downloading the form and submitting it to Dr S Maguire.

- AGREED:
- (i) that Ms Guyer ask Dr Maguire to copy any forms received from partner institutions that were included on the database to the relevant FHCC
 - (ii) that Ms Guyer to email partners to advise of the process, via the online discussion forum.

07.89 Course Revisions (Minute 07.59)

Members noted that Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) had agreed the proposal to include a check box on CA3 forms to alert FHCCs of course revisions which may have implications for linked external programmes.

07.90 Retention of Award Certificates (Minute 07.67)

The Chair advised that the Examinations Office had written to partner institutions to inform them of the University's policy on the retention and delivery of Award Certificates.

07.91 Monitoring of Library Resources (Minute 07.77)

The Chair advised that TLC had agreed the proposal to establish a group to clarify issues surrounding the monitoring of library and IT resources in partner institutions. The membership consisted of Dr P Hanna, Mr B McFetridge, Mr H Deighan, Mr N Wilson, Mrs C Avery and Mr G McFaul. An initial meeting had been held and it was proposed that a draft plan would be prepared over the summer for consideration by the FHCCF at its first meeting in 2007/08.

07.92 Promotion of courses in China/Hong Kong (Minute 07.78)

Members advised that they had passed Faculty details to Ms Tomita.

07.93 Staff Trained to Chair Examination Boards (Minute 07.79)

The Chair advised that TLC had agreed that any further training of Chairs of Examination Boards should be undertaken by the University and QMAU had advised partner institutions of this. The next event would be held in Armagh on 29 May 2007 with Dr Hanna and Dr Hagan attending.

07.94 Faculty Heads of Collaborative Courses Annual Report (Minute 07.81)

The Chair confirmed that TLC had noted that Dr Hanna, Mrs Mulholland and Ms Quinn would sit on the TLC Sub-Group to review Annual Course Review submissions for 2006/07.

07.95 Cultural Awareness Training Day (Minute 07.82)

The Cultural Awareness Training day had been held on 15 May 2007 and members advised that it had been a useful event for staff teaching international students but was less useful for cultural awareness for staff visiting China/Hong Kong for business purposes. Members suggested that a briefing pack for this purpose would be useful and that it may be helpful, following production of such a pack, to have informal discussions with Ms Tomita.

AGREED: that Ms Fee raise the proposal that a briefing pack be produced at the next meeting of the International Sub-Committee.

07.96 Access Diploma Dissemination Event (Minute 07.84)

Ms Fee and Ms Guyer reported that the outcome of the Access Diploma Dissemination event held on 22 March 2007 was awaited and gave an oral report. The following key issues were noted:

- That QAA legal advisers had advised that the age requirement for some access courses should be dropped;
- The proposed new Access award would be 60 credit points with a minimum of 45 at NICATS level 3;
- That, as students in the rest of the UK had Access awards recorded on UCAS, they were eligible to apply for University of Ulster courses automatically;
- That the rest of the UK would be working towards grading rather than pass/fail in the next couple of years.

TLC would consider a paper on the first issue in June 2007; the other matters do not raise significant issues for the University's provision and it was noted that all three attendees were confident that Access Diploma provision within the University of Ulster demonstrates a more coherent, holistic approach to adult learning.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

07.97 Institutional Review of Edexcel

Members were advised that the Annual Institutional Review Report for 2005/06 had been sent to Edexcel.

07.98 Higher Education Academy (HEA)

The Chair advised that the HEA were now producing a Northern Ireland Digest.

07.99 Studies Advice

The Chair advised that TLC had agreed that the effectiveness of Studies Advice should be included as a standard item on Staff/Student Consultative Meeting agendas and that the template would therefore require amendment.

AGREED: That Dr Hanna liaise with Mr Faulkner regarding the updating of the University template and advise partner HE Coordinators via the online discussion forum.

07.100 Academic Development and Student Services Committee (ADSSC)

The Chair reported the following issues from the last meeting of ADSSC:

- It had been agreed that curriculum mapping for proposed new progression routes should be completed initially by partner institution staff. The Faculty would subsequently complete the mapping exercise independently and compare results;
- Dr Mark Durkin had been appointed Director of Marketing with effect from 1 July 2007. It was proposed that Dr Durkin be invited to attend a meeting of the FHCCF;
- That the Work Experience Development Unit, located within the Career Development Centre, was developing material for placement tutors. It was proposed that Mr McGivern report to the 2008 Course Directors event on progress.

It was noted that the Making Practice-Based Learning Work project had produced a range of placement resources which were available to be downloaded free of charge.

AGREED: That Mrs Mulholland email HE Coordinators via the online discussion forum to advise them of the resources available.

07.101 International Collaboration in HE

Notes from the conference were circulated.

07.102 ETI IQ:RS

The Chair advised that comments on the proposed revised IQ:RS had been provided to ETI and that the approach remained very different from that taken by the QAA.

07.103 Ministry of Education on the Further Regulation of Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools

Members noted that a circular from the Ministry of Education had been sent to all members of the Forum.

07.104 Guide to Collaboration / Programme Approval, Management and Review Handbook

Members were advised that the Handbooks were being updated and any members who had amendments should forward them to Mr Faulkner by 1 June 2007.

07.105 Boards of Examiners: Procedures when External Examiner cannot attend

The Chair advised that the Examinations Office had noted that the Dean's Pack for partner institutions did not include the relevant forms relating to procedures to be followed when the External Examiner could not attend the Boards of Examiners and wished to clarify appropriate procedures for dealing with such circumstances in partner institutions.

- AGREED:
- (i) That the FHCC should complete the internal form requesting approval of the PVC (T&L) and that the partner institution Course Director complete the second form confirming that the external examiner had approved the results following the Board;
 - (ii) That, from 2008, amended versions of the forms be included in the Dean's pack for partner institutions.

07.106 ETI Inspection

Members noted with concern that college staff had reported an imminent survey/inspection of HE in FE in a number of colleges and subject areas but that the ETI had not informed the University.

Some college staff had been requesting information from the University and it was noted that QMAU could provide statistical data for previous years if requested. In addition, QMAU would attempt to find out more information about

the nature and scope of the review and whether this had any implications for the University. It was noted that it would not be appropriate for FHCCs to meet with ETI staff unless the University were formally involved in the inspection.

07.107 Operation of Online Forum

The Chair consulted with members regarding the effectiveness of the operation of the online forum. It was noted that there were 53 people enrolled covering 14 separate institutions (none of which were overseas institutions). Following discussion members concluded that:

The advantages of the online forum included:

- The opportunity for a single communication to reach all partners;
- That it provided an auditable, permanent record of communications;
- That it assisted in ensuring consistency of message.

The disadvantages included:

- That anyone not registered may miss out on communications;
- Communication had been one-way to date.

It was agreed that FHCCs should try to encourage increased involvement of staff in partner institutions.

COLLABORATIVE COURSES UNIT

07.108 Mrs Darrah and Mrs McAuley updated members on progress on the development of a Collaborative Courses Unit. Members noted:

- The Unit would be located in Room 1D10, Jordanstown from the end of September 2007;
- That the Unit hoped to provide transcripts in summer 2007 for all students who had completed one-year courses;
- That they were still receiving enrolment information for new students for 2006/07. Some of these were received without module information and were being entered as second semester enrolments;
- That class lists had been sent out in April to partner institution staff for checking. 50% had responded although it was likely that the strike had impacted on Colleges' ability to respond;
- It had originally been planned to record marks for students repeating but still in year 1 but this would not now be completed this year as the previous year's module results would not have been recorded by the University;
- The Finance Department had reported payment problems although the late enrolment fee had helped in this regard;
- The importance of checking that students appearing on Broadsheets were registered students now that partner institutions were generating their own

Broadsheets. In addition, students on leave of absence or who had withdrawn needed to be included;

- That exemptions from modules would appear on Broadsheets (marked 'E') provided the Examinations Office had been advised of this.

- AGREED:
- (i) that Academic Registry should give a presentation at the next Course Directors' event on the information required and the reasons for this;
 - (ii) that QMAU should provide Finance with details of the names of HE Coordinators in partner institutions so that Finance could liaise with them regarding non-payment of fees;
 - (iii) That Dr Hanna would liaise with Ms Darrah to consider what information could be obtained from the module database/impromptu;
 - (iv) That Dr Hanna would email HE Coordinators, via the online forum, to remind them of the need to include decisions relating to all students, including those on leave of absence/withdrawn, on examination Broadsheets.

Details of student enrolments by partner institution and course for 2006/07 was also provided for information.

Members thanked Mrs Darrah and Mrs McAuley for attending the meeting and Ms Fee thanked Mrs McAuley for the significant work which had been required to upload the marks for the Social Work modules and in resolving discrepancies.

HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY (HEA) EVENT

07.109 Members considered paper FHCCF/07/08 which provided information on the HEA and a draft programme for a staff development event for staff in partner institutions.

- AGREED:
- (i) That the HEA event comprise ½ day and be part of the staff development day for Course Directors;
 - (ii) That the objective of the HEA element of the event be to raise awareness of the HEA, resources available and encourage scholarly activity;
 - (iii) That a presentation from DEL was not required;
 - (iii) That Ms Quinn would contact Mr Norris and Ms Becket and liaise with College staff regarding the programme

ACCESS TO WebCT

07.110 Mrs Mulholland presented paper FHCCF/07/09 outlining potential benefits in providing access to WebCT for staff in partner institutions and how this could be taken forward. It was noted that there would need to be buy-in from College staff

and that there was a resource implication for Colleges. The University would provide a framework which could be used as an administrative tool covering areas such as communication, course management and module information. It was noted that it was unlikely that significant progress could be made currently owing to the strike action and that, therefore, timescales were deliberately broad at present.

It was suggested that WebCT would be of particular use for networks and that individual networks would need to agree levels of access for staff (allocation of 'a' codes).

AGREED: That the pilot at North Down and Ards and Causeway Institutes be further developed and that this matter be considered by the Forum again at its meeting on 7 November 2007.

QAA COLLABORATIVE PROVISION AUDIT (CPA)

07.111 Members received the QAA CPA Report, draft commentary on the recommendations and the minute from the meeting of TLC at which these were considered (paper FHCCF/07/10).

TLC's conclusions were noted, in particular, that it had been agreed that overseas partner institutions, where there is no right of appeal outside the institution, should make this explicit in their course literature.

AGREED: That a Working Group be established, comprised of Ms Guyer, Mr McFetridge and Mrs Boyle to consider:

- a. Monitoring of entry requirements;
- b. Monitoring of publicity material;
- c. Minimum documentation requirements for FHCCs.

The Working Group would report back to the 7 November 2007 meeting of the Forum.

Members also noted that the Change Academy project was reviewing the University's models of approach to collaborative activity and that the University's Collaborative Strategy had not been updated pending the outcome of this review. Members expressed concern regarding the future direction for the Forum and the implications for staff considering applying for the FHCC role before the way forward had been clarified.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT EVENT FOR COURSE DIRECTORS

07.112 Members discussed the content and format of the staff development event for course directors and AGREED:

- (i) That the event start at around 10.00am and conclude with lunch;
- (ii) That the event take place on or around Thursday 11 October 2007 avoiding half-term;
- (iii) That a suitably located partner institution be invited to host the event;
- (iv) That the content include: Collaborative Courses Unit, Issues arising from Annual Course Review, three sessions in relation to the HEA (see minute 07.109 above);
- (v) That BIFHE be invited to give a short presentation on initiatives in employer engagement with particular reference to the work of their Workforce and Economic Development (WED) unit (Ms Guyer to discuss with BIFHE - see minute 07.113 below).

Dr Hanna would liaise with Mr Deighan regarding arrangements.

ANNUAL COURSE REVIEW

07.113

The Forum received the Annual Course Review Report for 2005/06 (FHCCF/07/11) and the minutes of the TLC meeting which considered the report. It was noted that TLC had approved the Sub-Group's recommendations with the exception of recommendation 2 following agreement by Governance Services to the agreement with SCAU.

The Forum considered the items referred to it by the Sub-Group:

Recommendation 3: Encouragement in the use of standard templates/minutes for SSCCs and Course Committee meetings.

It was agreed that this would be taken forward via the online forum and also raised at the Course Directors' staff development event.

Recommendation 4: Encourage active engagement with employers

It was agreed that BIFHE should be invited to make a presentation as part of the Course Directors' staff development event on the work of its Workforce and Economic Development unit.

Recommendation 5: Monitoring of Extenuating Circumstances across networks

It was agreed that this would be covered in the staff development event for Course Directors in October 2007.

Recommendation 6: Implementation and monitoring of University policy on anonymous marking

It was agreed that this should be communicated to partner staff via the online forum and be covered at the staff development event for Course Directors. It was noted that Colleges did not always have systems in place for ensuring anonymous marking for coursework and that it was consequently difficult to monitor compliance with the University's policy.

Recommendation 9: Attendance at Course Committee meetings and proper academic governance.

It was agreed that, in addition to covering this at the staff development event for Course Directors, this should be raised at the Open Meeting of the FHCCF.

Recommendation 11: Board of Examiners: module profile changes

Members were advised that the Dean's pack had been updated to include revised templates for agendas and minutes of Boards of Examiners to note any changes in module profiles.

Correction

It was noted that the statement on page 37 of the Annual Course Review Report which stated '*Staff teaching in outcentres regularly meet with staff on the UU programmes, but staff from BIFHE do not attend these meetings*' was factually incorrect.

DATES FOR MEETINGS NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR (2007/08)

07.114 The dates for meetings for 2007/08 were noted (FHCCF/07/12).

PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING FACULTY AND UNIVERSITY OBJECTIVES FOR COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY

07.115 Verbal reports were received from Faculties on issues relating to collaborative activity.

Faculty of Arts

- Upper Bann had asked the University to consider provision in Art and Design following the withdrawal of Huddersfield University;
- The CCEA had approached Art and Design with regard to cooperation in respect of art teacher training;

- The Faculty was in discussion with NWIFHE and representatives of the Irish medium sector with regard to a Cert HE for those working in the pre-School sector;
- Professor Lillie had been invited to speak on HE in FE at a forthcoming ESCalate event.

Faculty of Social Sciences

- The revalidation of the Certificate in Police Studies is making good progress and the Course Planning Team are working towards a September 2008 launch;
- There were ongoing issues in Social Work with regard to some colleges not having access agreements in place and the non-payment of fees to BIFHE by the University;
- There was significant revalidation activity within the Faculty of Social Sciences in relation to collaborative activity during the next academic year. Faculty panels have been arranged for Faculty level validation and all partners are at an advanced stage in the process of producing quality documentation.

Faculty of Business and Management

- The validation of Fd Events Management at BIFHE had been successful;
- Provision at HTMi had been successfully revalidated to bring it into line with the home course. Members were advised that the college had sought approval to offer the final year of the honours degree in two intakes with students completing the final year in 20 weeks and that this had been agreed by the University revalidation panel;
- NEI who have merged with East Antrim have received approval from Edexcel to run the University 12 module model of the HND for the remainder of the license: the University would not be involved in any way;
- It has been reported that other colleges in the UU HND/C Network are discussing the possibility of running a Foundation degree across a network of colleges, no contact has been made with the Faculty in this respect;
- Edexcel are to relaunch the HND in 2008;
- A communication had been received from the Global International Educational Corporation, Crete in Greece, wishing to explore a possible collaboration with the Faculty in delivery of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in business and management. After consultation with the Faculty, a reply had been sent indicating that the Faculty strategic plans would not enable the development of a partnership of this nature.

Faculty of Life and Health Sciences

- Two CA2s had had to be revised as they had not been approved;
- A communication summarizing recent policy changes and issues raised relating to the conduct of Boards of Examiners had been sent to Course Directors for all programmes within the Faculty. A copy was provided for other FHCCs for information and it was AGREED that Ms Guyer should circulate this electronically.

Faculty of Engineering

- Feedback from college staff suggested that there was some doubt over whether Boards of Examiners would be held this summer in the light of the ongoing strike action;
- A new Access course at BIFHE had been successfully validated;
- Preparations for validations of computing provision were ongoing with the new merged colleges working together and that a CA2 had been submitted to expand provision with collaborative courses now sharing MaSN;
- The draft report from the Creativity and Innovation in Curriculum Working Group proposed a similar working method to the FHCCF;
- Following the very recent successful evaluation of a new programme in Upper Bann Institute, a revalidation event was due to take place in a couple of weeks.