

**Faculty Heads of Collaborative Courses: Annual Report on  
Good Practice in Partner Institutions**

**November 2006**

## Introduction

The report collates examples of Good Practice as identified through the Annual Course Review and more specifically through the Faculty Heads' reports as part of that process.

As an extension to that process it is proposed that partner institutions nominate a Good Practice Champion to capture, record and disseminate good practice procedures.

It is proposed that an exemplar for such a procedure would be that currently operated by the University's Staff Development Unit. The Unit has established a web-based database of internal good practice in relation to key areas of teaching and learning. This resource is accessible by all at the University allowing for staff to share and learn from each other's experiences.

The database is organised into a number of key themes reflecting current activities within the University which will be reviewed periodically. Current themes include:

- Assessment,
- E-learning,
- Teaching first-year students,
- Teaching large groups,
- Reflective practice,
- Plagiarism,
- other as defined by case study contact

In terms of day-to-day operation, the Staff Development web site has a Case Study Form which may be downloaded by staff and which aims to capture the key aspects of the good practice. Information is recorded on the form under the following headings:

- **School:** (where is it done?)
- **Course(s):** (on which programmes are the students enrolled?)
- **Theme:** (Under which key theme would you classify it? Assessment, e-learning, teaching first-year students, teaching large groups, reflective practice, plagiarism, other as defined by you)
- **Activity: (brief outline- 50 words)** (What do you do?)
- **Evaluation:** (how do you know it is effective?)
- **Challenges and Issues:** (what advice would you give others considering an activity like this)
- **Further developments:** (how would you change it?)
- **Contact:** (who would you contact for further information?)

The completed form is forwarded to the relevant member of staff (e.g. the Good Practice Champion) who arranges to have the information uploaded to the web-based database.

It is proposed that the above procedure be extended to include partner institutions.

## **Good practice as identified as part of the FHCC annual reporting process 2005/06**

There follows a collation of examples of good practice as noted by Faculty Heads during their input to the annual monitoring process.

Following discussion it was decided not to attribute these examples of good practice to the respective partner institutions but simply to present them anonymously and within themes.

### **Good Practice**

The practices noted below are classified under the following themes:

- Pastoral Care
- Student Learning and Support
- Course/Programme Management

#### **Pastoral Care**

1. Include links within the Student Handbook to relevant outside organisations, such as Professional Bodies, relevant local company web sites and independent support agencies such as the Samaritans etc.
2. Arrange a class social event for both staff and students as part of the induction process.
3. Appoint an "Attendance Monitor" whose (administrative) role is to monitor student attendance at "random" points in the day and to follow up those students whose attendance is below acceptable levels to identify any reasons for the absences which can then be addressed as appropriate.

#### **Student Learning and Support**

1. Encourage the students by seeking externally sponsored course level prizes.
2. Provide students with feedback on examinations.
3. Provide students retaking modules with additional revision classes.
4. Where possible, embed an opportunity to gain professional or skills certification (e.g. ECDL) alongside the academic award.
5. Use students on later stages of a programme within the induction process for new students.
6. Consider hosting local "industry" conferences within your Institution to give your students exposure to major companies within the relevant sector and also to make the sector aware of your graduates.

7. The establishment of an Employers' Forum has helped students gain exposure to potential employers for both WBL opportunities and eventual employment.
8. Prepare students for the process of applying for WBL opportunities by conducting mock interviews.
9. Preparation for work placement should include visiting speakers providing sessions on interview skills, assertiveness and time management skills.

### **Course/Programme Management**

1. When preparing for revalidation, involve the External Examiner in discussions regarding any proposed changes.
2. When there is a planned change of Course Director, the outgoing Course Director should continue to work alongside the incumbent to provide support and guidance for the first year.
3. Produce an academic calendar for your programme to include, for example, dates of staff/student and course committee meetings, examination periods (including resits), teaching periods, etc
4. When designing a new programme, involve local employers and the relevant Sector Skills Councils from the initial concept stage rather than asking them to "approve" what has already been done.
5. Invite relevant non-academic staff (e.g. technical support and/or library staff) to staff/student meetings where their input to a particular student query is appropriate.
6. Allocating a half day at the end of the academic year for the course team to review and discuss the programme facilitates reflective practice and also serves as excellent preparation for the Annual Course Review document.
7. One partner in a network provided revision classes for another partner's students in advance of the re-sit classes, illustrating the close nature of the network.
8. The provision of administrative staff to record minutes at course committee meetings is helpful as is the use of VLE to identify agenda items, post minutes of meetings and inform students of outcomes of SSCC.

**Recommendations: Database of Good Practice**

The recommendations outlined below are designed to address, first, the upcoming situation with college mergers and the need to preserve existing good practice and, secondly, introduce procedures to support partner institutions in the capture and dissemination of new examples of good practice.

It is recommended to the Teaching and Learning Committee:

- That the UU Staff Development Unit be asked to allow partner institutions access to the University's good practice database at:  
[http://www.ulster.ac.uk/staffdev/database\\_of\\_good\\_practice.phtml](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/staffdev/database_of_good_practice.phtml)
- That partner institutions be able to access and complete the Case Study Form (at the above URL) and forward completed forms to QMAU for consideration at FHCCF.
- That following discussion and evaluation at FHCCF, examples of good practice be forwarded to the UU Staff Development Unit for uploading into the Database of Good Practice.
- That good practice in collaborative provision be integrated into the UU Staff Development Unit's Database of Good Practice web site and be accessible to partner institutions.
- That the section on "Good practice as identified as part of the FHCC annual reporting process 2005/06" from this paper be circulated to partner institutions by FHCCs via the On-line Forum.
- That partner institutions be recommended to nominate a Good Practice Champion whose role would be to collate good practice within the institution and forward documentation to QMAU for inclusion in the database of good practice.