

ANNUAL REPORT ON GOOD PRACTICE 2009/10

1. INTRODUCTION

This report draws on examples of good practice in the provision of higher education in the FE sector on courses approved by the University of Ulster. Areas of good practice are identified through the annual course review process and through interactions between the Faculty Heads of Collaborative Courses and staff in partner institutions.

The report does not attribute individual examples of good practice to specific partners; it merely presents them anonymously within themes. Further information on areas identified can be obtained from the Quality Management and Audit Unit.

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- i) Evidence of an increase in the development of videos and online tutorial support to enhance teaching.
- ii) Embedding internationalisation in the curriculum with an increase in international placements where students share their experience with peers on their return.
- iii) Selective use of guest speakers, industry experts and field visits to underpin the teaching on a programme, and foster stronger links between theory and practice.
- iv) All external examiners on computing and engineering programmes commented on good practice in the administration and delivery of the work-based learning modules, and of the standard and quality of the actual placements.

3. ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION

- i) Student work on the Access Diploma is presented in a bundle for each student (as opposed to a bundle for each module), enabling the external examiner to review an individual student's progress across the programme. Statistical information for each cohort is also presented so that monitoring at module level can also be achieved.
- ii) Students undertake a written exercise to show how they used feedback to improve subsequent pieces of coursework.

4. COURSE MANAGEMENT

- i) Extensive use is made of a very good video-conferencing system, enabling the FHCC to attend short sections of Course Committee meetings from a distance, and the External Examiner to speak to students on the other campuses, not just the campus which is hosting the Board of Examiners.
- ii) Increased use of social networking media e.g. Facebook to support course promotion and management.
- iii) Establishment of WBL Employers' Event to provide an opportunity for academic staff and employers to receive student feedback.
- iv) Increase in the number of Colleges entering students for external competitions e.g. three of a College's Foundation Degree students were awarded top prizes in the inaugural province-wide BEST (Best and Education through Training and Skills) awards. Students on a FdSc in Computing took top place and runner-up in the 19+ category with a software project to manage the Essential Skills students at the college, and software to manage community sports facilities. The top communicator prize also went to a college for a system to manage a music school.
- v) The establishment of HE Strategy Groups and HE Co-ordinators Forums and similar committees to provide a strategic oversight over HE provision.

5. STUDENT SUPPORT

- i) Appointment of an Attendance Officer who monitors the register, contacts students where necessary, and reports patterns of attendance to academic staff prompting them where attendance is deemed unsatisfactory.
- ii) External Examiners commented on the very high level of pastoral support provided by tutors, to ensure that students were provided with every opportunity to successfully progress through the programme.

6. ANNUAL COURSE REVIEW

Evidence that the outcomes from the QAA Developmental Reviews were being referred to in annual course review submissions e.g. Code of Practice on assessment.

7. RECOMMENDATION

That the paper be circulated to collaborative partners.