

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

REPORT OF THE JOINT REVALIDATION / RE-APPROVAL OF REVALIDATION UNIT 22B2: SPECIALIST AND COMMUNITY PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING (POST-REG)

13 March 2018

PANEL: Professor I Montgomery, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement), Ulster University (Chair)
Dr S Ponsonby-McCabe, Lecturer in Marketing Communications, Department of Management, Leadership and Marketing, Ulster University
Mrs H Kimble, Senior Lecturer and Course Leader, Faculty of Health and Society, University of Northampton
Mrs Y Perry, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Health and Wellbeing, University of Central Lancashire

REVALIDATION UNIT

CO-ORDINATOR: Ms A Long, Lecturer in Nursing, School of Nursing, Ulster University

NMC Reviewer: Ms C Proud, Director of Placements, Faculty of Health and Life Science, Northumbria University

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs K McCafferty, Academic Office, Ulster University

1 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The Panel met to consider the revalidation/re-approval of the following provision offered by the School of Nursing:

BSc Hons Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (with pathways in health visiting and school nursing) (FT/PT)

PgDip Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (with pathways in health visiting and school nursing) (FT/PT)

The programmes were commissioned by the Department of Health (DOH) in response to the need for a Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) provision. The programmes accord with the current Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Standards of Proficiency for Specialist Community Public Health Nurses.

Ulster University is the sole provider of the programmes in Northern Ireland and demand for the provision continues to be steady. The programmes have two pathways, Health Visiting (HV) and School Nursing (SN). The highest demand currently is for the HV pathway. The majority of students study on a full-time basis and a part-time option will be available from 2018/19 to increase flexibility for students.

The undergraduate programme comprises four compulsory taught modules. Each module is worth 30 credit points. Students enter at level 6 having been exempted from Level 4 and 5 following the APL process. Students who choose to study on the undergraduate programme are required to have a Higher Education Diploma in Nursing, equivalent to 240 credit points or to submit a portfolio as evidence of APL.

Students choosing the postgraduate level programme are required to have a first degree in nursing or a health-related area. There are four compulsory taught modules each worth 30 credit points.

A Practice Learning Agreement is put in place between the School of Nursing and the Health and Social Care Trusts in relation to practice-based learning. The Practice-based learning is undertaken alongside the theoretical modules and both components must be passed for the student to be given the award and have it recorded with the NMC.

Students are required to complete a minimum of 128 days in the practice-learning environment under the supervision of a Practice Teacher. Practice days take place alongside the theoretical teaching in the university during Semesters 1 and 2. Students attend the University two days per week.

Semester 3 focuses on the achievement of the NMC Standards of Proficiency for SCPHN within the practice-learning environment and is evidenced by the development of a Practice Learning Portfolio.

The Panel met with the Senior Management Team from the Faculty, which included the Associate Dean (Education), the Associate Head of School of Nursing and the Subject Unit Co-ordinator. The Panel then met with a group of students followed by a meeting with Practice Teachers, Service Users and Placement Providers. Finally, the Panel met with the Course Team to discuss the provision in detail.

2 DOCUMENTATION

The Panel received the following documentation:

- Course Submission
- Ulster University Guidelines for Revalidation Panels
- Mott MacDonald Programme Approval/Re-approval Flow Chart
- Section 1 from the Quality Assurance Handbook (September 2017) relating to programme approval/re-approval
- NMC AEI and Practice Partners Annual Self-Assessment Report 2017/2018
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Health Care programmes: Health Visiting and Nursing
- QAA Draft Statement of 'Common Purpose for Subject Benchmarks for the Health and Social Care Professions
- NMC 'Standards of Proficiency in Specialist Community Public Health Nursing' (2004)
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Master's Degree Characteristics (March 2010))
- External Examiners' Reports for the last two years
- Preliminary comments from Panel members

3 MEETING WITH SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

3.1 Overview

At the start of the Senior Management Team meeting the Subject Unit Co-ordinator gave a short presentation to the Panel about the provision and outlined how the programmes had developed since the last revalidation. The presentation also provided an insight into how the Course Team had approached the revalidation. The Panel noted that the views from both the students and the major stakeholders had

been taken on board and used in further developing and enhancing the programmes being offered.

The Panel noted that the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences had a large portfolio of health programmes. The SCPHN provision was an important component and recruited well. Both undergraduate and postgraduate level was on offer to students. It was a well-established provision and met the Faculty's strategy of engagement with stakeholders, inclusion and flexibility, notably through the introduction of a part-time route from 2018. The Panel noted it was a commissioned provision and was fundamental in meeting service needs. The Senior Management Team stated that it was a high quality provision with 100% employability.

3.2 Staff Development

The Panel noted that the School of Nursing kept a register of Practice Teachers and noted that part-time staff had some access to staff development but that this would normally come through their internal staff development departments within the health trusts.

The Panel asked if staff teaching on the school nursing pathway had a NMC Practice Teacher qualification and noted the School was currently developing this and that it would be available from September 2018. The NMC representative emphasised the need for commitment to the qualification to ensure that students on the school nursing pathway were having the same experience as those students doing health visiting.

The Senior Management Team also informed the Panel that there was input from the research-active members of staff within the School of Nursing to both the development and delivery of the provision.

The Panel enquired about a School Service User Strategy and noted that one was in place and currently being reviewed. The Panel heard that Service Users contributed to the delivery of the programmes and that there was a process followed on how to engage with them.

3.3 Programme Level Differentiation

The Panel noted the similarities between the programme learning outcomes for the different award levels and asked how students at Level 7 were being stretched without over-whelming those students studying at Level 6.

The Senior Management Team explained that they currently had more students studying at Level 7 and that seminars were structured in such a way to accommodate the different levels. The Panel noted that students were delivered the same key knowledge but that during the seminars the differentiation between the two levels became more evident.

4 MEETING WITH STUDENTS

The Panel met with a group of students and the following responses were given to a range of questions.

The students felt there was good support from staff. Some students felt that the workload was challenging and that the part-time mode was a good development.

The students stated that the bringing together of both the school nursing and health visiting cohorts worked. The students felt that it was beneficial to see the different perspectives. The Panel noted that the students split up when specific issues were being taught for each pathway.

The Panel asked the students what they had done during the fifteen days of alternative practice, a requirement of the NMC. Many of the students had chosen to work with midwives. Others had worked alongside social workers, school nurses and within child development departments. The Panel noted that the students were given guidance when choosing an area to work in to ensure it was relevant to them. The students stated that some organisations were very over-stretched and struggled to fit students in.

The students stated that they felt there was a good partnership between staff at Ulster University and the Practice Teachers.

The Panel heard that the majority of students had individual Practice Teachers with only a small number having to share a teacher.

The Panel asked the students how they gathered feedback from Service Users for their portfolio and noted that they used a feedback form. The Panel noted that the Service Users also provided verbal feedback to the Practice Teacher.

The Panel heard that students could text Practice Teachers and Service Users. The Panel noted that Ulster University encouraged the students to use Facebook and set-up WhatsApp groups to keep in contact with each other. One of the students also stated that she had found twitter to be a good tool for keeping up-to-date with developments in health visiting.

The Panel asked how international best practice was shared with the students and noted that the Research Module taught them how to recognise good research. The students also stated that the lecturers directed them towards areas of good research.

The students informed the Panel that there were two student representatives on each programme responsible for informing the Course Team of any issues raised. Regular meetings also took place between the students and the Course Director and issues could be raised during these discussions. The Panel noted that the students on placement could go to their Practice Teacher with any issues they had which then filtered through to the Course Director.

The Panel noted that the students completed module evaluation forms once a module was completed.

The Panel commented on the move to the new Belfast campus and asked the students for their thoughts. The students felt that car parking might be an issue. For some students the extra time spent on travelling into Belfast may be an issue. The students suggested that the use of Skype should be explored during times of severe weather conditions that affect students living in rural areas

The Panel asked how much blended learning was used in the delivery of the programme and noted that it was mainly all classroom based. The students felt that Skype lectures should be considered. BlackBoard Learn was considered an excellent support tool and the availability of EBooks and journals online was very useful.

The Panel commented on 'community prescribing' and noted from the students that it was previously included within the programme. The students felt that it would be a good skill to have explaining that it would benefit families and save them from having to get a GP appointment. The students appreciated that the practice time required for prescribing was a challenge as some health visitors did not use it.

Overall, the students felt they were well supported and in particular, one student stated that she received excellent support with her dyslexia.

The students also stated that the Practice Teachers asked for their opinions. The students felt included, valued, and part of a team. The Panel also noted that clinical supervision was carried out on a regular basis.

5 MEETING WITH PRACTICE TEACHERS, PLACEMENT PROVIDERS AND SERVICE USERS

The Panel met with a number of Practice Teachers, Placement Providers and Service Users from across the Health Trusts.

5.1 Practice Teacher Support

The Panel asked the Practice Teachers how they were kept informed of new developments or changes in the curriculum.

The Panel noted that Practice Teachers received ongoing support through update days arranged by Ulster University.

The Panel also noted that Practice Teachers were represented on the SCPHN Committee within the School of Nursing. Any revisions, changes or developments were shared through this committee. The Panel noted that a good relationship existed between the University and the Practice Teachers.

As part of the revalidation process the Panel noted that the Practice Teachers had been involved in various steering groups, consultations and discussions about the provision.

The Practice Teachers welcomed the reduction in the number of modules and felt that it would provide focus for the students. The bringing together of the 'Safe-guarding' and 'Leadership' topics was also considered a good move and the Practice Teachers felt that students would learn more.

The Practice Teachers felt the Part-time route would be popular and informed the Panel that a number of Band 5 Public Health Nurses were interested in following this route. For those students choosing the School Nursing pathway the Practice Teachers felt the part-time route was the better option.

The Panel asked the Practice Teachers if they preferred working with students studying at Level 6 or Level 7 and noted there was a desire for Level 7 students. The Practice Teachers explained that they needed people who were clinically good and able to practice safely and competently. Clinical competencies were an important skill for students to have.

The Practice Teachers felt they were involved in the development and enhancement of the programmes. They were getting the right students and the recruitment process was a joint effort.

5.2 Service Users

The Panel asked the Service Users how they had been included in the revalidation process and noted that they had completed a questionnaire. The Panel also noted that the Service Users had helped to design the questionnaire and were pleased to be able to provide an input.

The Service Users explained that a student health visitor had visited them and that the experience had been very positive. The Service Users were very happy to be involved and have a chance to help.

5.3 Student Support

The Panel commented on the move to the new Belfast campus and asked if the Practice Teachers felt students would face challenges with travelling. The Panel also asked if placements were matched to where students lived. The Panel heard that every effort was taken to match a placement as close as possible to where a student lived.

The Panel asked what happened during the summer for students on the School Nursing pathway when schools were closed and noted that some children's clinics were run during the summer. The Practice Teachers also stated that child protection cases continued through the summer months. The Practice Teachers felt that the students received good coverage of topics including public health issues, behaviour clinics and family based issues.

5.4 Concluding Comments

The Panel asked the Practice Teachers for their concluding comments and noted overall that they needed to be kept up-to-date with current issues and have enough resources to support the students.

The Panel asked the Practice Teachers how they viewed their role and noted that they wanted to inspire students and set an example. The Practice Teachers stated that they wanted to encourage and challenge the students.

6 MEETING WITH COURSE TEAM

6.1 Part-time Mode

The Panel asked the Course Team to explain how they would integrate the part-time and full-time students and manage both cohorts.

The Course Team explained that the part-time and full-time students would be taught together in the first year. The part-time students would have less placement days and would attend University on one day only.

The Panel asked how a student identity would develop for part-time students. The Course Team explained that the main driver to offer a part-time route had come from the service and informed the Panel that they anticipated 15 part-time students. The Panel heard that the Course Team encouraged students to connect with each other through BlackBoard Learn, Facebook and WhatsApp. The Course Team felt that students would form their own identity through these communication tools.

6.2 Service User Involvement

The Panel asked the Course Team about Service User involvement in the recruitment of students. The Course Team explained that the health trusts had strong connections with Service Users through engagement in Service User Forums. The Service Users had the opportunity to share their opinions and ideas as to what they would like to see from a student.

The Panel asked if the health trusts involved Service Users in the interview panels but noted that their contributions were built-in behind the scene. The Panel noted that a common regional approach to interviewing was used by all the health trusts to ensure the right students were selected to train.

6.3 Assessment Strategy

The Panel enquired if all learning outcomes identified in the module descriptions had to be passed as it stated that 'all learning outcomes are assessed in both pieces of assessment'. The Course Team explained that each module description had four learning outcomes and that the first assessment linked to the second assessment. The Panel heard that the learning outcomes could not be attached to specific pieces of assessment.

The Course Team confirmed that Practice Teachers were involved in the assessment of poster presentations.

6.4 Sharing of Information

The Course Team informed the Panel that there was a regional Education Practice forum and representatives from all the health trusts came together every three months. Policies, procedures, Practice Teacher programmes and opportunities to raise concerns were all developed and shared through this forum.

The Panel also noted that the School of Nursing engaged with health organisations and advisory groups. Any relevant information from these discussions fed through to the forum. The Panel heard that the Northern Ireland Education Council was currently conducting research to measure the impact of the SCPHN provision on society and to find out what needs to be improved.

The Panel noted that the School of Nursing had connections with four research centres. Regular events were held at Ulster University and the Practice Teachers were invited to come in and hear about updates. Any relevant research was also shared.

6.5 Practice Learning

The Panel asked how the Course Team ensured there was a high quality learning environment provided for students and noted that there was a regionally developed 'Educational Audit for Practice Learning' tool used. The Course Team explained that an audit was undertaken every two years. The Panel noted that the audit was used to identify issues in the environment, for example, staff reductions which could have an impact on the students practice learning.

The Panel also noted that if a student identified concerns within their learning environment these were addressed. The Course Team informed the Panel that some areas have in the past been closed so that an investigation could be undertaken. The Panel noted that new audits were carried out to ensure areas would be suitable for practice learning. The Panel also advised that the NMC was immediately notified if an area had been closed.

The Panel asked if Practice Teachers had the opportunity to provide feedback about the University and the students. The Course Team explained that Practice Teachers were represented on the SCPHN Forum and had the opportunity to provide comments and feedback at this stage.

6.6 Use of Emerging Technologies

The Panel commented on the variety of emerging technologies and asked if these could influence how the programme was delivered. The Course Team explained that they were looking at alternative delivery methods and considering video-links for induction.

6.7 Alternative Practice Days

The Panel asked how the 'alternative practice days' worked. The Practice Teachers explained that students had fifteen alternative days to spend in settings and with clients, which, whilst not central to their future role, enabled them to understand the context of practice in all community public health settings. The Panel noted that the students could spend time with midwives, social workers and with other practitioners in various areas within the health trusts. The Panel noted that it was impossible to avoid inter-agency contact and that multidisciplinary connections was part of the subject area. The Panel noted that some health trusts had taken a pro-active approach to the alternative practice days by getting students to spend a day in the neo-natal units.

6.8 Pastoral Support

The Panel commented on the mental health of students and asked what support was in place. The Course Team explained that the Practice Teachers viewed the students as employees and informed them of all the policies in relation to staff care within the health trusts. The Panel noted that the students were encouraged to reflect and to discuss how they feel. The Course Team explained that within the Ulster University students were told who to approach if they have any problems. The Panel heard that the School of Nursing had strong pastoral student support

7 CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel commended the Course Team on the following:

- The overall course planning process, including the integrative partnership with stakeholders and the co-production of the curriculum
- The strong working relationships that have been effectively built-up between the stakeholders and the university and the opportunities taken to develop links with the community
- The integrated approach to practice learning and academic learning
- The evidence of effective student support from both the academic staff and the Students' Union, eg, support for students with dyslexia
- The clear awareness of changes in culture and society that have been reflected in the content and delivery of the provision

The Panel agreed to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the provision be approved for a further five years (intakes 2018/19 to 2022/23 inclusive) subject to the condition and recommendations of the Panel being addressed and a satisfactory response and a revised submission being forwarded to the Academic Office by **8 May 2018** for approval by the Chair of the Panel.

The NMC Reviewer will recommend re-approval of the provision subject to the condition and recommendations of the joint Panel being addressed and receipt of a satisfactory response and a revised programme documentation.

Conditions

- (i) that the regulatory and standards matters identified by the Academic Office be addressed (appendix).

Recommendations

- (i) that the integration of part-time 'school nursing' lecturing staff into the course team, planning and delivery be addressed;
- (ii) that blended learning opportunities continue to be monitored;
- (iii) that consideration be given to exploring how 'service user' involvement in the admissions process could be strengthened;
- (iv) that consideration be given to sending the entire validation team the full set of course documents and subsequent revisions before the meeting as currently only sent to the NMC representative.

APPRECIATION

The Chair thanked all the members of the Panel and in particular, the external members, for their valuable contributions to the revalidation exercise.