

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/21/4

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

11 March 2021

Agenda Item 7

COVER SHEET

TWO-YEAR PART-TIME FOUNDATION DEGREE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Presenter: Mrs A McKenna

To receive an update paper (min 20.66 refers).

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

PART -TIME FOUNDATION DEGREE IN HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIPS

UPDATE PAPER

1. BACKGROUND

Following quality concerns with the Two-Year/Three Semester (2Y3S) model of Foundation Degrees (FD), the University paused validation of new provision and revalidation of existing provision in areas where standards were not being met. The 2Y3S model had become the preferred qualification delivery model for Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) in the FE colleges. Within this context a redesign for this format of Accelerated Provision was piloted with the FD Civil Engineering in Belfast Metropolitan College. In Dec 2019 a position paper (ASQEC/19/42) reviewing this provision was presented to ASQEC with a set of recommendations:

1. Development of a strategy that aggregates demand within sustainable frameworks for sectors.
2. Development of a set of Ulster Principles around Higher Level Apprenticeships within Foundation degrees which include setting out how work based learning can be incorporated within the Higher Level Apprenticeships in Foundation degree model.
3. Development of a 'rough guide' design toolkit following an apprenticeship model to share with the sector including advice on including, for example, the authentic use of work.
4. Cascade a support model for Colleges to assure the rollout of the principles and rough guide toolkit in a timely and effective matter
5. The establishment of a Task and Finish Group to oversee recommendations 1 to 4.
6. Any further programmes within our partner validated provision seeking to redesign their current provision should do so as a separate exercise to current delivery and bring forward the full (re)designed curriculum for consideration.
7. The use of the accelerated or part-time models until any potential new model is agreed.

2. HLA FOUNDATION DEGREE TASK & FINISH GROUP

The establishment of the HLA FD Task & Finish Group was delayed in progressing these recommendations and the first meeting was held in January 2021. Membership of the task and finish group includes representation from Quality Enhancement, CHERP, Faculty Partnership Managers, Apprenticeship Hub and Course Directors of Degree Apprenticeships which have articulation pathways from current HLA FD.

Recommendations 1-4 were taken as the basis for an initial Terms of Reference for the work of this group however, these have been amended to recognise developments in practice since Dec 2019 including the development of the Integrated Curriculum Design Framework.

The following objectives were agreed by the group:

1. Review of current FD qualification delivery models within HLA provision.
2. Development of an Ulster HLA strategy to include sectoral provision and pathways.
3. Consideration of FD development within the Integrated Curriculum Design Framework.
4. Cascade of a support model for Colleges to ensure and enhance FD experience within the context of HLA.

3. REVIEW OF FD PROVISION IN HLA

At present there is no requirement for a college to seek university approval before submitting an application to the Department for the Economy (DfE) for recognition of the validated FD as the qualification within the HLA. The table below is a consolidated overview of Ulster University validated FD within HLA and the articulation point into Ulster provision either at part-time, full-time or degree apprenticeships (where available). There are 3 models of FD delivery in HLA; 2Y3S (Fast-track), 2Y+1S (Accelerated) and 3Y. There are 3 models of articulation dependent on Faculty and professional body requirements; start of Level 5, 40 credits of bridging at Level 5 or start of Level 6. The next stage of this review will consider success 1 and success 2 figures across this provision and articulation into Ulster programmes as a comparator between sectors and delivery models to inform the strategic approach to HLA.

Foundation Degree	Programme Name	Faculty	College	Duration	Articulation
FdEng	Advanced Manufacturing - Electrical & Electronic Engineering	CEBE	NRC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT
FdEng	Advanced Manufacturing - Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering	CEBE	NRC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT
FdEng	Civil Engineering	CEBE	BMC	2Y3S	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT or Degree Apprenticeship
FdEng	Civil Engineering (CertHE exit award)	CEBE	SWC	2Y+1S	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT or Degree Apprenticeship
FdEng	Civil Engineering (CertHE exit award)	CEBE	SWC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT or Degree Apprenticeship
FdSc	Computing	CEBE	NRC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT or Degree Apprenticeship
FdSc	Computing	CEBE	SERC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT or Degree Apprenticeship
FdSc	Computing	CEBE	SWC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT or Degree Apprenticeship
FdSc	Construction Engineering with Surveying	CEBE	NRC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT or Degree Apprenticeship
FdSc	Construction Engineering with Surveying	CEBE	SWC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT or Degree Apprenticeship
FdEng	Manufacturing Engineering	CEBE	SWC	2y+1S	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT. Degree Apprenticeship under development
FdEng	Mechanical Engineering	CEBE	NWRC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT
FdEng	Mechatronic Engineering	CEBE	SRC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT
FdEng	Mechatronic Engineering	CEBE	SERC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT
FdEng	Mechatronic Engineering	CEBE	SWC	2Y+1S	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT
FdEng	Mechatronic Engineering	CEBE	SWC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT
FdSc	Software Development	CEBE	NWRC	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT or Degree Apprenticeship
FdSc	Applied Industrial Science (Chemical Science)	LHS	SRC	2Y3S	Level 6 (Final Yr) Degree Apprenticeship
FdSc	Applied Industrial Science (Life Science)	LHS	SRC	2Y3S	Level 6 (Final Yr) Degree Apprenticeship
FdSc	Food and Drink Manufacture	LHS	CAFRE	3Y	Level 5 (Y2) of PT, FT. Degree Apprenticeship under development
FdSc	Business Management	UUBS	SWC	2.5Yrs	40 credits at Level 5 (bridging) & Level 6 (Final Yr) PT, FT
FdSc	Hospitality & Tourism Management with Specialisms	UUBS	NWRC	2Y+1S	40 credits at Level 5 (bridging) & Level 6 (Final Yr) PT, FT
FdSc	Hospitality & Tourism Management with Specialisms	UUBS	SRC	2Y+1S	40 credits at Level 5 (bridging) & Level 6 (Final Yr) PT, FT
FdSc	Hospitality & Tourism Management with Specialisms	UUBS	BMC	2Y+1S	40 credits at Level 5 (bridging) & Level 6 (Final Yr) PT, FT
FdSc	Hospitality & Tourism Management with Specialisms	UUBS	NWRC	2Y+1S	40 credits at Level 5 (bridging) & Level 6 (Final Yr) PT, FT

4. CURRENT OPERATING CONTEXT: INFLUENCE ON STRATEGIC APPROACH

The current operating context is markedly different to that in Dec 2019 when the original recommendations were proposed and due consideration will be given to this when developing Ulster's HLA Strategy.

Key Areas for Consideration include:

- i. Apprenticeships are a key component within the DfE Economic Recovery Plan¹ and will be extended to the Public Sector.
- ii. The recent DfE Apprenticeship Challenge Fund has supported a number of projects including a Belfast City Regional Deal project (including 6 councils, 4 colleges and the 2 universities) to review sectoral apprenticeship pathways and articulation between levels. Sectoral pathway reports are due between March and June 2021.
- iii. The HE in FE review has identified the 2+2 model as an area for further discussion due to potential duplication at level 5.
- iv. DfE do not require delivery of the FD HLA in two years, but a **minimum** time of two years is required.
- v. The publication of the April 2020 DfE Operational Requirements for HLA Level 6+; Section 2.5; Previous Qualifications state: "A person who is graduate or has previously achieved a recognised vocational qualification is eligible to enter HLA provision if (a) it is at a higher level to their achieved qualification; or (b) is in a subject unrelated to their qualification.
- vi. Apprenticeships (higher level and degree) are the subject of heightened interest from employers as they look to diversify talent pipelines, and attract and retain high calibre skilled employees.

5. FUTURE ACTIONS

- i. The Task & Finish Group will continue to progress on the delivery of the recommendations with due regard to the current operating context.
- ii. A report will be provided to the June meeting of ASQEC.

¹ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/df-e-economic-recovery-action-plan.pdf>