

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

ACADEMIC PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2017 by video-conferencing

PRESENT

Professor P Bartholomew (Chair), Dr S Crothers, Mr A G Faulkner, Professor J Jędrzejewski, Mr D McGivern, Professor B P Murphy, Mrs J Peden, Mrs T Purdy

APOLOGIES

Professor L Maguire, Mrs L McClelland

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs A Garland (Secretariat), Dr H Bruce, Professor K Fleming, Professor F Lyons and Dr C Sibbett (Min 17.62), Ms S McCall (Min 17.63), Dr S McGuinness (Min 17.64), Professor P Griffiths (Min 17.67), Dr K Stapleton (Min 17.71)

17.56 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Academic Planning Advisory Group held on 27 February 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

17.57 Access Diploma in Social Sciences at South West College (Mins 17.15 & 17.42)

It was noted that the Subject Partnership Manager had confirmed that appropriate additional library resources for the Omagh campus had been ordered. The Faculty would provide confirmation to the Advisory Group once the additional library resources were in place.

17.58 Proposed BSc Hons Nursing (FT/PT) at University of Buraimi, Oman (Mins 17.27 & 17.46)

It was noted that the Faculty had reported that it was working with the Finance Department in relation to the financial model and the Executive Dean was in contact with the Dean of the College of Health Science at the University of Buraimi with regard to due diligence and a new proposal on costings, as well as the English language entry standard.

17.59 BSc Hons Community Youth Work (Part-time Fast-track) (JN) (Min 17.48)

Dr Crothers reported that he had discussed the implications for block grant and statutory returns with the Faculty. He clarified that, although the programme had been described as being funded in full by the Education Authority, this referred only to student fees, and noted that the new mode of study was not a Higher Level Apprenticeship arrangement.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 17.60 The Chair reported that, in view of the timing of this special meeting, there should be no need for the scheduled meeting of 5 May 2017.

COURSE PLANNING

ACCESS, DIGITAL AND DISTRIBUTED LEARNING (APAG/17/14)

- 17.61 Proposed Diploma in Foundation Studies (with named pathways) with International English Language (FT) (BT/JN/ME/CE) (APAG/17/14a)

The Advisory Group received a course proposal and business case to offer an International Foundation Year (IFY), leading to the award of Diploma in Foundation Studies (with named pathways) with International English Language, from September 2017. It noted that:

- the proposal was part of the strategic development in the Global Engagement portfolio; it would provide a bridge between the existing academic and English language level of prospective students and the level required for Honours degree study and IELTS 6.0, and would therefore increase accessibility of the University's degrees to a wider, global audience;
- it was unusual for a UK university not to offer provision of this kind; a similar programme was offered by Queen's University, Belfast through INTO;
- as this was pan-faculty provision, ADDL would provide its academic home and governance;
- the programme would be piloted at Belfast/Jordanstown, but would be expected to expand thereafter to Coleraine and Magee;
- the programme had a common skills-related core of 60 credits and two pathways:
 - (i) a STEM pathway for progression to degrees in the Faculties of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment and Life and Health Sciences;
 - (ii) a Business, Arts, Health and Social Sciences (BAHSS) pathway for progression to degrees in the Ulster University Business School and the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences;
- it was envisaged that there would be most demand for Business School courses, followed by STEM subjects;
- the STEM route was at the present time more fully developed than the BAHSS pathway; the module titles included on the course proposal form were indicative and would be reviewed as planning progressed;
- each pathway consisted of 40 credits in foundation modules and 20 credits related to the progression degrees and would include cultural and study skills development;
- the equivalent of GCSE Mathematics would be required for admission to all STEM and Business programmes;
- applicants would be issued a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) for the International Foundation Year programme only;
- the primary target market was high school students; students under the age of 18 at the published start dates of the course would not be admitted during the pilot in order to ensure that sufficient time was available to develop appropriate guardianship arrangements;
- the proposed intake in the first year was 15 students, rising to 70 by the fourth year; the business case stated that the programme would break-even

economically at 22 enrolments by the second year of operation; a total fee income of over £4M from the Foundation Year and the degrees to which students progressed would be generated over the first five years;

- the average fee for such a programme at other institutions in the UK was in the region of £15,000 but, as this programme was new to the market and given the geographical location of the University, the initial fee would be set at £8,500;
- an International Scholarship Fund, financed by top-slicing the IFY fee and the progression degree fee, would be available for two full-fee equivalent awards per 15 students enrolled;
- the income from the provision would be distributed among the faculties as for other provision managed by ADDL;
- based on a maximum of 70 students, no additional staffing resources would be required, although additional e-learning and marketing resources would be needed;
- flexibility in relation to students' English language proficiency would be incorporated into the design of the programme through the use of small group teaching and streaming students based on needs; students with a higher standard of English language would be able to substitute modules from the range of modules offered by ADDL or have the opportunity to undertake a project in relation to their chosen pathway;
- the need for the University to invest in extra-curricular activities to enable the integration of students had been considered and the Course Director would have additional duties in relation to pastoral care; the planning team would work with the International Office and Residential Services to ensure a holistic student experience.

The Advisory Group was concerned that, as the actual market for the specific Ulster course had not yet been identified and the proposed start date was September 2017, there might be insufficient time to recruit sufficient numbers of students for each pathway to give a high-quality student experience. It was reassured by the commitments made by the Faculties, Global Engagement and ADDL to provide a high level of support and ensure a positive experience for all students throughout their stay, regardless of the numbers on each pathway. It noted that a January intake was a possibility.

AGREED that:

- (i) it be recommended to Senate that the proposal be approved to proceed to planning and evaluation for a September 2017 start;
- (ii) Professor Murphy be congratulated on the detail provided on costings, fees and viability; the exercise was very useful for the future development of the model to support Faculties' course planning and the work of this group and its successor.

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (APAG/17/15)

17.62 Proposed MSc Art Therapy (PT) (BT) (APAG/17/15a)

The Advisory Group received a course proposal to offer MSc Art Therapy from September 2018. It noted that:

- the Faculty now proposed to offer an MA Arts Therapies with pathways in Art Therapy (BT) and Music Therapy (ME), both in full-time and part-time modes;

- students would be recruited to the campus of their pathway choice; pathway-specific modules would be delivered on-campus and common modules would be delivered face-to-face at one campus and online at the other;
- the titles 'Art Therapist' and 'Music Therapist' were protected titles and the Faculty proposed a joint PSRB validation event with the Health and Care Professions Council;
- there was currently no provision at Master's level for Art Therapy in Northern Ireland and no provision for Music Therapy in the island of Ireland; there was evidence of long-standing demand for such training; the course would build on a course previously offered at Queen's University Belfast and subsequently validated by an English university;
- the course would fit well with the Faculty's teaching and research in the areas of health and well-being therapy and community engagement;
- other relevant schools in the Faculty and in the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences would be involved in course planning;
- the Faculty had revised the projected intakes to a total of 15 part-time, 20 full-time in Year 1 and 30 (15 in each pathway – 10FT, 5PT) in subsequent years;
- there was potential to deliver some of the modules as short summer courses and to extend to Drama Therapy in the future;
- the staff team were aware of the need for fitness for practice arrangements and checks to be part of the application process;
- Dr Sibbett was not a member of University staff but was an experienced practitioner who would support curriculum planning and delivery.

AGREED that:

- (i) it be recommended to Senate that the proposal be approved to proceed to planning and evaluation for a September 2018 start;
- (ii) Professor Murphy work with the course planning team to carry out a transparent costing in order to ascertain the break-even point for the programme, and that this information be provided to the next meeting.

17.63 Access Diploma in Social Science at Northern Regional College (APAG/17/15b)

The Advisory Group received a course revision proposal to bring forward the delivery of the programme in full-time mode at the Magherafelt campus by two years to September 2017 (originally approved from September 2019 at revalidation in December 2015). It noted that:

- the programme was currently delivered at this campus in part-time mode;
- at the time of revalidation in 2015 it had been decided to take an incremental approach to delivery on the Magherafelt campus owing to the staffing situation but that a strong teaching team, including a new Course Director, was now in place at this campus;
- the Subject Partnership Manager had visited the Magherafelt campus and had met the new Course Director and identified with the library staff additional resources that would be required;
- Ms McCall was satisfied that adequate physical and human resources were in place to support full-time delivery;
- the proposal was supported by the Faculty and the external examiner;

- progression rates to the University were not as high as the Faculty would like and a Faculty day had been planned for Access to HE students to promote appropriate courses;
- support for Access courses was an important aspect of the University's widening participation agenda.

AGREED that it be recommended to Senate that the proposal to offer the programme in full-time mode at the Magherafelt campus from September 2017 be approved.

17.64 Master of Education with Specialisms (APAG/17/15c and APAG/17/15d)

The Advisory Group received two retrospective course revision proposals to offer part of the course at Carrick-on-Shannon Education Centre (outcentre) from 2015/16 (Paper APAG/17/15c) and fully online from 2016/17 (Paper APAG/17/15d). It noted that:

- two 30-credit point modules were already being delivered by the Faculty at Carrick-on-Shannon Education Centre and that these modules were also delivered at the Magee campus and two approved outcentres, Athlone and Monaghan Education Centres;
- the target cohort size at Carrick-on-Shannon was 10–15 students, with a break-even number of 10 students;
- the business model for this proposal followed that used at Athlone and Monaghan outcentres and the facilities were provided free of charge;
- a legal agreement with Carrick-on-Shannon would be prepared following approval;
- a Digital Learning Resource Agreement had not been provided for the fully online proposal but the Faculty had been working with the Office for Digital Learning;
- the majority of modules in the course were only available fully online and the proposal to offer the programme fully online would formally recognise that the full course, depending on the modules selected, could be taken in this mode of study.

AGREED that:

- (i) it be recommended to Senate that the proposals to offer part of the course at Carrick-on-Shannon Education Centre (outcentre) from 2015/16 and fully online from 2016/17 be approved;
- (ii) that the Faculty be reminded of the need to adhere to the formal approval process; retrospective approvals were not at all helpful in maintaining appropriate oversight;
- (iii) that a Digital Learning Resource Agreement be drawn up.

17.65 PgDip/MSc Applied Peace and Conflict Studies (FT) (APAG/17/15e) (APSC minutes 15.74 and 15.85 refer)

The Advisory Group received a formal course revision proposal to change the location of the programme from the Magee campus to the Jordanstown campus. It noted that the change of location had been decided as part of the University's restructuring in 2015/16 but the programme had received approval from Senate to be reinstated on the Magee campus for the 2016/17 intake.

AGREED that the proposal be endorsed.

17.66 Programme Withdrawals

It was noted that the following programmes have been withdrawn:

Last intake 2014/15

CertHE in Community Development at North West Regional College;
PgDip/MSc Applied Peace and Conflict Studies with Early Years (ME).

Last intake 2017/18

CertHE in Community Development at Belfast Metropolitan College.

FACULTY OF COMPUTING, ENGINEERING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (APAG/17/07)

17.67 Proposed BEng Hons Energy and Building Services Engineering (PT) at University of Hong Kong (HKU SPACE) (APAG/17/16a)

The Advisory Group received a proposal from HKU School of Continuing and Professional Education to offer BEng Hons Energy and Building Services Engineering from September 2017 and the Faculty's Assessment and Business Plan. It noted that:

- the proposal was supported by the Faculty;
- a Higher Diploma in Engineering (FT) and Advanced Diploma in Engineering (PT) were both offered by HKU; HKU wished to partner with the University to create a 'top-up' progression route to a full BEng Hons degree programme;
- students would enter final level directly under an articulation arrangement or with advanced standing; the final level was the same as the University's BEng Hons Architectural Engineering (PT) Years 5 and 6 and no curriculum changes were proposed;
- a curriculum mapping exercise had been carried out for Levels 4 and 5 and bridging modules would be introduced where necessary;
- the course would be validated provision with a proposed intake of 50 students;
- the financial model was based on 16% of the Hong Kong student fee being paid to the University; this arrangement was already in place for other University-validated provision at HKU SPACE;
- some of the costings had been based on 16% of Ulster's fee instead of the Hong Kong fee and these figures should be disregarded;
- the title of the programme for HKU SPACE ('Energy and Building Services Engineering') differed from the current title of the home programme ('Architectural Engineering') as the latter was not well understood in Hong Kong; 'Energy and Building Services Engineering' was the previous title of the Ulster programme which adopted the new title from the 2015 intake; given that the proposal was for admission to the corresponding Year 5 of the home course, the HKU title would be the same as that of an existing Ulster course until the latter's last graduation;
- a University validation event would be required to provide assurance of the HKU team's understanding of the curriculum and ability to deliver it and the resources and facilities in this new subject-area; the Faculty should liaise with the Academic Office about the timing of this event.

AGREED that:

- (i) it be recommended to Senate that the proposal be approved to proceed to planning and evaluation for a September 2017 intake;
- (ii) more accurate costings be provided, using 16% of the correct fee, to include a break-even point and transparency in relation to staff costs.

17.68 Programme Withdrawals

It was noted that the following programmes had been withdrawn:

No intake

FdSc Architectural Technology with Sustainable Design at South Eastern Regional College (Downpatrick and Lisburn campuses);
FdEng Building Services and Renewable Energy at South Eastern Regional College (Newtownards campus);
FdSc Sustainable Construction at South Eastern Regional College (Downpatrick and Lisburn campuses).

FACULTY OF LIFE AND HEALTH SCIENCES (APAG/17/08)

17.69 Programme Withdrawals

It was noted that the following programmes had been withdrawn:

No intake

BSc Hons Applied Sport Management at Higher Colleges of Technology, Abu Dhabi (outcentre).

Last intake 2016/17

MSc Sports Development and Coaching (JN).

Last intake 2017/18

PgDip/MSc Cataract and Refractive Surgery (Theory) (DL) – withdrawal of MSc component only (PgDip remains).

ULSTER UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL (APAG/17/09)

17.70 Proposed MSc Management and Corporate Governance at University of Hong Kong (HKUSPACE) (Min 17.53 refers)

It was noted that the Faculty had requested that consideration of the revised course revision proposal and Faculty Business Plan be deferred until the next meeting of the Advisory Group, which was now scheduled for 20 June 2017.

The Faculty had reported that the proposed revisions to the HKU curriculum were appropriate but had not yet been formally approved by HKU. The fee would be discussed further with HKU SPACE in May.

17.71 ASKING GRADE AMENDMENTS (APAG/17/17)

The Advisory Group discussed a request from the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences to raise the asking grades for BSc Hons Communication, Advertising and Marketing (CAM) from ABB-AAB to AAB-AAA. It noted that:

- in the past the asking grades had been AAA with an intake of around 30 students;
- that unsuccessful CAM students were offered a place on another of the School's courses but the suite of courses had been significantly reduced following revalidation;
- asking grades had been lowered to ABB-AAB which had led to increased demand and cohort size;
- the Faculty wished to reduce intake to the previous level of 30 students to meet MASN targets.

AGREED that, as a grade range was confusing to applicants, asking grades from 2018 intake be revised to AAA, subject to confirmation from the Faculty that it was content not to use a grade range.

Duration: 2 hours 20 minutes

13 April 2017

AGF/AG