

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/19/15f

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

17 June 2019

Agenda Item 6.3

EXTENSION OF APPROVAL

Faculty of Life and Health Sciences

BSc Hons Biology; MSci Hons Biological Sciences

COVER SHEET

To note that Chair's action has been taken on behalf of the Committee to approve the one-year extension to the period of approval.

**SECTION A: FACULTY REQUEST**

FACULTY: Life & Health Science

SCHOOL: School of Biomedical Sciences

SUBJECT UNIT NUMBER AND NAME: 3A

MONTH/YEAR CURRENTLY SCHEDULED: November 2019

PERIOD OF EXTENSION REQUESTED: one year to include Sept 2020 intake  
(eg one year to include the September 2018 intake)

COURSE(S): BSc Hons Biology; MSci (Hons) Biological Sciences  
(Identify specific courses unless the whole unit)

**REASON FOR REQUEST:**

In summary, changes were made in Biology provision via CA3 in 2016-17 and a new External Examiner was appointed in August 2017, therefore it would be beneficial to delay revalidation to permit another year of review before revalidation. Furthermore, many of the contributing modules were revised for the recent Biomed revalidation. As the unit portfolio includes the MSci (Hons) Biol programme it is requested that the two continue to be considered together.

**CURRENCY AND VALIDITY:**

(Please confirm that the curriculum remains current and valid and provide evidence of this (eg extract from most recent external examiner reports and those of relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body)

The programme was significantly restructured in August 2016 due to staffing changes as a result of restructuring. Therefore, new modules were introduced in Year 1: Ecology & Biodiversity and Year 2: Veterinary Biology. Furthermore, existing modules in Infection and Immunity and Pharmacology from BSc Hons Biomedical Sciences were adopted in the Biology programme. One module, Molecular Biology, was revised to modify the credit value from 10 to 20 points in line with new University guidelines. Furthermore, the Investigative Project module has been standardized in line with the BSc Hons Biomedical Sciences programme, with students from both courses taking the same 40 credit point module. A CA3 detailing these significant changes was submitted and approved in August 2016 (see attached) and the changes to the programme have been well-received by students. Reporting at the Staff-Student Consultative Committee in Nov 2016, the final year class rep reported that the changes in modules were viewed as “a positive move for biology students as modules were now more relevant to their career progression” and “students were enjoying the challenge of the new modules”. A significant proportion of the modules which comprise the Biology course are common with BSc Biomedical Sciences which has recently undergone successful revalidation. Therefore there is no current need for any further changes.

**STANDARDS AND QUALITY:**

(Please confirm that quality is high and there are no concerns. Provide evidence of this through external examiner reports and annual monitoring datasets and reports)

A new External Examiner, Prof Michael Schweizer was appointed in August 2017. There would therefore be value in another year of review by the External Examiner before revalidation. Prof Shweizer has been consulted with regard to the application for an extension and is supportive of this proposal.

Prof Schweizer's 2017/18 External Examiner report supports the validity and currency of the provision stating: "professional practice standards compare favourably with those of other UK HEIs" and "clearly the students are provided with a very good educational experience and are given the opportunity for active participation" and finally "the teaching and learning process are of a high calibre".

**PSRB (if applicable):**

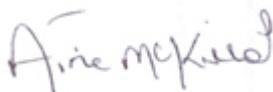
(Please confirm that any deferral will be accommodated by the PSRB and that accreditation will be ongoing for the full duration of the deferral)

N/A

**DEMAND:**

**FACULTY PARTNERSHIP MANAGER'S ASSESSMENT (for partner institutions only):**

**FACULTY CONFIRMATION:**



SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Dean (Education)

7 March 2019  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

The completed form should be returned to the Academic Office, Room J410, Tower Building, Coleraine.

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**SECTION B: ACADEMIC OFFICE COMMENTS:**

Unit 3A last underwent revalidation in 2014/15 and a review of three years of external examiner reports for Biology and Biotechnology indicates a good level of assurance in terms of standards and quality. It was evident from the external examiner reports that the Course Team was responsive to external examiner comments and to performance indicators, taking appropriate remedial action where required and enhancing the course to improve the student experience. The external examiner reports also indicated that a number of changes had taken place to both modules and course provision in the unit in the last few years and the externals endorsement of those changes. The external examiner reports only cover the undergraduate provision as the MSci course is yet to have an intake. The Academic Office endorses the faculty request for a year extension of approval.



SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: 13 March 2019  
Academic Policy and Standards Manager or Head of Academic Office

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**SECTION C: QUALITY ENHANCEMENT ASSESSMENT (reflecting annual monitoring data)**

SIGNED: Janet M H. Meyer \_\_\_\_\_ 14 March 2019 \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Head of Quality Enhancement

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**SECTION D: ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE**  
(delegated authority from Senate)

DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING:

DECISION: Approve (Yes/No)

Late requests (in-year and no imminent Committee meeting) (actioned by Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) on behalf of ASQEC)

DECISION: Approve (Yes/No)

SIGNED: P. Bartholomew \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: 22 March 2019 \_\_\_\_\_  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)

DATE REPORTED TO ASQEC:

Academic Office  
July 2018