

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/19/39c)

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

5 December 2019

Agenda Item 5.4

EXTENSION OF APPROVAL

Faculty of Life and Health Sciences

FdSc Paramedic Practice at Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

COVER SHEET

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

SECTION A: FACULTY REQUEST

FACULTY: Life and Health Sciences

SCHOOL: Nursing

REVALIDATION UNIT NUMBER AND NAME: Paramedic Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) 22K

MONTH/YEAR CURRENTLY SCHEDULED: November 2020

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

Two years, that is to have the last intake of students on a full 2 year foundation degree in August 2021.

COURSE(S):
(Identify specific courses unless the whole unit)

FdSc in Paramedic Practice

REASON FOR REQUEST:

This foundation degree was initially validated for two years, that is the length of the tender (two cohorts), and it would seem a logical approach to seek an extension to this current period of approval, rather than proceed to a full revalidation. NIAS wish to avail of the opportunities to have two further intakes on the FdSc in Paramedic Practice following the end of the agreed tenure; up to and including August 2021.

This extension is being sought, with an understanding that there is a potential opportunity for a BSc Hons in Paramedic Practice, with a tentative evaluation event in 2020, for 2020/2021 intake,

The reason for this request is that in September 2021 the HCPC requires Paramedic education to be an honours degree entry qualification. NIAS have an operational demand to continue to increase their Paramedic workforce. In order to satisfy this demand with a steady number of Paramedics, there is a necessity to continue with the FdSc in Paramedic Practice, during the transition to an Honours degree programme.

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 curriculum remains current having just completed its first year of running (Level 5 modules). The first BOE was held on 16th October 2019, and the external examiner, Mr Neil Hore was in attendance. Mr Hore provided feedback to the Course Team and the Chair of the BOE on his views of the programme, commenting that the course is well structured, enabling a flexible individual learning experience that benefits practitioners and patients, service improvements and personal and

professional development. Mr Hore remarked on the team's innovative approach to engaging practitioners and practice within this collaborative provision, and that the programme reflects the true value of professional and regulatory requirements. Mr Hore provided a provisional written report of his views which is attached.

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)

There are no major concerns with the quality of the programme from the Faculty Partnership Manager's perspective, nor from the Associate Course Director, who is a lecturer from within the School of Nursing. As this is the first year of the programme, there are no annual monitoring databases as yet. There were 47 students within the first cohort inclusive of 1 EL and 1 LOA. The external examiner was congratulatory on the student's success, recognising the difficulties faced in the first year of delivering any course of study. Mr Hore observed that the number of distinctions, commendations and resit students is commensurate with similar programmes across the UK. Mr Hore was confident that the assessment strategy, which is varied, supports students with different learning styles and facilitates deeper learning. Assessment had been conducted equitably, marking was consistent and feedback generally constructive. Mr Hore noted that in discussions with him student feedback was very positive.

The decision to seek extension to the approval and postponement of the revalidation of this programme was discussed thoroughly with Mr Hore following his opportunity to moderate, meet students and the course team this week and he is very supportive of this request.

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)

NIAS has already sought the opportunity with HCPC to increase Year 1 cohort size to 48 in a third and fourth cohort commencing before the cut-off date of September 2021 and received the following confirmation from HCPC on 25th April 2019:

The programme will remain approved between the commencement dates recorded of the first cohort and final cohort. Accordingly, approval will continue for qualifications held by:

- existing registrants;
- learners who started the programme in the approved dates, who are currently completing programme and who successfully complete the programme in the future; and
- applicants to the Register through the return to practice route to registration who completed the programme during the approved dates.

DEMAND:

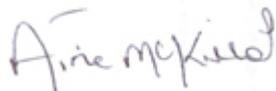
The NI Ambulance Service has a significant shortfall in their Paramedic workforce. In order to increase the numbers of Paramedics now and to continue to do so, NIAS is supporting the education of their current Emergency Medical Technicians to Paramedics, with a proposed number of 47-50 students per intake (January 2020, January 2021 and two proposed intakes (Year 1 and a Year 2 intakes) in August 2021. NIAS are now also in a position to seek applications from the public to Year 1 of the foundation degree in August 2021 (though potentially earlier), this is supported by HCPC. Currently, those wishing to undertake this qualification have to leave NI.

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

This programme commenced in January 2019, with 47 students, with 1 early leaver and 1 LOA. As this is the first year of the programme, and new to everyone, there have been some predictable teething problems as the programme 'beds in', something acknowledged by the EE Mr Hore at the

recent BOE. These teething problems had been identified early and appropriate strategies were put in place to enhance the delivery of the programme and the student experience. There is one lecturer from the School of Nursing acting as an Associate Course Director supporting the quality assurance of the programme, alongside the Course Director and the Faculty Partnership Manager (FPM). The team at NIAS have been very engaging with the FPM and consistently welcomed and acted upon the support advice and guidance at each step of the programme to ensure the appropriate quality standards are achieved. The FPM has had access to all aspects of the course, including admissions and enrolment, learning and teaching, assessment, resources and engagement with the students. In addition, the student success communicated at the BOE and the positive comments from the external examiner is very reassuring that the programme is running very well.

FACULTY CONFIRMATION:



SIGNED: _____ DATE: 18 October 2019
Associate Dean (Education)

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

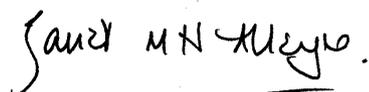
SECTION B: ACADEMIC OFFICE COMMENTS:

As the course is yet to be delivered in its entirety the external examiner has not reported formally however he has provided a useful statement in support of the quality and standards of the course. Given that the evaluation panel gave approval for two years based upon the length of the tender, rather than the usual five years, means that the scheduled revalidation is unusual in terms of its timing and does not reflect concern about the standards of the programme. As the requested extension of approval would still be within the duration of a 'standard' five year approval and, given the supportive comments from the external examiner and the HCPC's confirmation that they are content to recognise the course for the proposed period of extension, the Academic Office endorses this request for an extension of approval to include a final intake in August 2021.



SIGNED: _____ DATE: 25.10.2019
Academic Policy and Standards Manager or Head of Academic Office

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



SIGNED: _____ DATE: 28 October 2019
Head of Quality Enhancement

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 Chair on behalf of ASQEC)

DECISION: Approve (Yes/No)

SIGNED: P. Bartholomew DATE: 28 November 2019
 Chair ASQEC

DATE REPORTED TO ASQEC:

Academic Office
July 2019