

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/21/2e)

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

11 March 2021

Agenda Item 5.4.2

COVER SHEET

EXTENSION OF APPROVAL

Faculty of Life and Health Sciences

Unit 25B: Collaborative Provision (Psychology)

Presenter: Professor A McKillop

To consider a proposal for a one-year extension to the period of approval for the Certificate of Higher Education in Combined Social and Behavioural Sciences (BMC) to include the September 2022 intake.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

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REQUEST TO EXTEND APPROVAL AND POSTPONE REVALIDATION

Form CA6b)

SECTION A: FACULTY REQUEST

FACULTY: Life and Health Sciences

SCHOOL: Psychology

REVALIDATION UNIT NUMBER AND NAME: 25B Certificate of Higher Education in Combined Social and Behavioural Sciences

MONTH/YEAR CURRENTLY SCHEDULED: October 2021

PERIOD OF EXTENSION REQUESTED:
One year, to include the September 2022 intake

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

REASON FOR REQUEST:

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the past 10 months have been a demanding time for all course teams. Dealing with the fall-out of the pandemic and coping with the demands that this places on teaching staff and students alike has been an all-consuming task. To that end the Belfast Metropolitan team teaching on this Certificate in Higher Education in Combined Social and Behavioural Sciences have worked tirelessly to ensure that students not only have a very positive learning experience but that they confidently meet the learning outcomes of the programme as validated. In conversation with the Course Director, and the Curriculum Area Manager we have received a request for consideration of one year's extension to the programme.

The rationale for this extension request is in two parts. Firstly, the course team currently believe that they are working at capacity [successfully] to ensure that the learning experience for the current cohort of students is maximised. The team feel they would be stretched to give the fullness of due attention needed for the revalidation at this present time. Secondly, the team note that the social and behavioural needs learning landscape post-COVID is unclear and they believe that the social and behavioural sciences needs of society will become much clearer when the pandemic and our societal reaction to it has passed. To that end an extension would be especially useful to ensure that the Cert HE Combined Social and Behavioural Sciences is as current as it can be in terms of student learning needs and societal response. The team wish to ensure that as a result of the revalidation process they can shape a dynamic, innovated and integrated curricula and argue that a 12 month extension would greatly assist them to do so given the current circumstances.

There are no statutory regulatory or professional bodies linked to this 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 offered via this programme remains current and valid and some extracts from the most recently available External Examiner's Report help to underline this. Regarding the subject specific currency the EE states:

“Great effort is clearly expended by the teaching team to foster the development of strong study skills in the students which I believe suitably equips the students for joining a degree programme in psychology or the social sciences at Level 5. In my discussion with the students it is clear that they are appreciative of being taught generic, transferable study skills and recognise how this has helped them to develop academically. The content and level of the programme would meet the entry requirements for registering at Level 5 on any British Psychological Society accredited Psychology degrees.”

The Course Team have provided a very considered response to the EE Report and it is clear that they very much take a reflective approach to their role and have given careful thought to the comments and suggestions made. The most recently available EE Report is provided along with this CA6b application.

2020/2021 articulation figures initially demonstrate 12 students have articulated to Ulster from this programme onto 6 programmes:

BSc Health and Social Care Policy	2
BSc Criminology and Criminal Justice	5
BSc Social Policy and Criminology	1
BSc Sociology	1
BSc Psychology	2
BSc Occupational Therapy	1

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 concerns regarding the quality of the student learning experience on this programme. It is interesting to read a comment from the EE when she says; “in my experience this programme of study in terms of the content, assessment criteria and student performance conform to expectations of Level 4 (and possibly Level 5).” The EE further notes that she feels confident “to say that the course complies with the QAA's standards for Level 4 which are outlined in their Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.” Practically speaking, the EE has been involved in the review of assessments and has had the opportunity to comment and make suggestions on these at the point of production and prior to dissemination.

The standard of both marking and grading are noted to comply with the assessment criteria set and were applied consistently across “all assignments and modules” with any areas of apparent discrepancy identified and properly explained. It seems clear that “there is a very clear audit trail for the internal moderation process which demonstrated a high level of consistency between the grades awarded by both the first marker and the internal moderator.” Lastly, the EE has commented that in the future improvements could be made through the use of rubrics and this is very much something that will form an important part of the teams revalidation considerations as it is an element of the Ulster ICDF. This is confirmed by the team when they say in their response to the EE report that they have acted on the pedagogic encouragement provided by the EE and that they very much espouse a culture within the team that is reflective and professional, saying that through an “*open and honest relationship we have developed [it] allows us the confidence to question our own practices and seek to improve our already excellent practice.*”

In the recent review of data provided via the CAQE process, no issues of concern were identified for this programme and that the programme should continue as planned.

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)

Whilst this course is not subject to PSRB regulation, the previous comments made by the EE in relation to the way in which the course is aligned in both content and level for onward articulation to BPS accredited psychology degrees is important to note.

DEMAND:

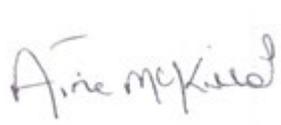
In general the demand for this programme remains high and this is encouraging. There has been a slight drop in numbers this current academic year but the context of the pandemic may well explain this as a temporary issue. The table below offers an understanding of the enrolment numbers over the lifetime of the present programme.

Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Year 1 PT	36	40	35	36	21
Year 2 PT	33	32	36	29	29

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

I am very content that should an extension of current provision be approved, the student experience will not be adversely affected at all and students will continue to enjoy a very positive and rewarding education experience at Belfast Metropolitan College on this programme. The EE Report for this programme and the Course Teams response to it could be considered exemplary examples of both and in my time working with this team I have very much seen in action the things they speak about on paper. I believe that granting this team a year's extension of provision would yield very positive results and would contribute to making an already strong programme even stronger and even more fit for purpose, award and onward articulation.

FACULTY CONFIRMATION:



SIGNED: _____
Associate Dean (Education)

28 January 2021
DATE: _____

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

SECTION B: ACADEMIC OFFICE COMMENTS:

The CertHE Combined Social and Behavioural Sciences programme was scheduled to be revalidated in 2021/22 and the request is for an extension of approval to 2022/23 due to the impact of the Pandemic on both society and the course team's workload. I have reviewed two years of external

examiner reports and they were very supportive of the provision, the quality and standards and the evidence of student learning and achievement. Overall it appears that the course is operating well.



SIGNED: _____
Academic Policy and Standards Manager

DATE: _15.2.2021_

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

SIGNED: _____ *Sarah M H. Kelly* _____ 16 February 2021 _____
DATE: _____
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: _____
Chair ASQEC

DATE: _____

DATE REPORTED TO ASQEC:

Academic Office
July 2019