

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

ACADEMIC PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2018 by video-conferencing

PRESENT

Professor B P Murphy (Chair), Dr S Crothers, Mr A G Faulkner, Dr M Keenan (for Professor L Maguire), Mr D McGivern, Mrs J Peden, Mrs T Purdy, Mrs E Thompson

APOLOGIES

Professor P Bartholomew, Professor L Maguire, Mrs R McEvoy

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs A Garland (Secretariat), Professor R Fee (Min 18.38 and Min 18.39), Dr C Rhys (Min 18.38), Dr N Cook (Min 18.40), Professor A McKillop (Mins 18.40 and 18.44) Mrs T Mullan (Min 18.40), Dr D Gallagher (Min 18.41), Dr S Loane (Min 18.41), Mr M McCrory (Min 18.42), Dr R Douglas (Min 18.44)

18.22 MEMBERSHIP

The Chair reported that Mrs Roisin McEvoy, Head of Admissions, had joined the Advisory Group to represent the Admissions Service.

18.23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Academic Planning Advisory Group held on 29 January 2018 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

18.24 Proposed MSc Animation and VFX (FT/PT) (BT) (also DL from 2019/20) (Min 17.80, meeting of 20.6.17 and Min 17.128, meeting of 21.11.17)

It was noted that the Faculty now proposed a change in award and title to MA Animation for the programme.

18.25 Proposed MSc Applied Finance (Min 17.120, meeting of 27.9.17 and Min 18.2)

It was noted that evidence of approval of the non-standard fee for the programme at HKU SPACE (outcentre) had not yet been provided by the Ulster University Business School.

18.26 Proposed MSc Energy Storage (Min 17.135, meeting of 21.11.17 and Min 18.4)

Dr Keenan confirmed that the proposal was for a Master's programme with exit awards and that there would only be a full-time intake in the first instance. A Digital Learning Resource Agreement had now been signed.

- 18.27 Advanced Diploma in Managing the Customer Contact (Min 17.148, meeting of 21.11.17 and Min 18.9)

The Advisory Group noted that confirmation of external examiner support for delivery of the programme at ATOS IT Services UK Ltd from 2017/18 had not yet been received.

- 18.28 Proposed MSc Internet of Things (FT/PT) (JN) (Min 18.11)

It was noted that the Faculty had reported that approximately half of the students in the projected intake figures (15 rising to 30) would be part-time. Dr Crothers advised that only a full-time intake was included in the Academic Plan.

AGREED that the Faculty be asked to re-configure the business case for this proposal in light of this revision.

- 18.29 Proposed MSc Strength and Conditioning (FT/PT) (JN) (Min 18.14)

It was noted that confirmation of the Executive Dean's approval of the course costings had not yet been received.

- 18.30 Proposed MSc [Company Name] Global Capital Markets (with PgCert and PgDip exit awards) (PT) (JN/in company) (Min 18.16)

The Advisory Group noted that the course costings had now been approved by the Executive Dean and that the name of the employer company had been removed from the title of the programme.

- 18.31 Proposed MSc Entrepreneurial Competitiveness (PT) (BT) (Min 18.17)

It was noted that the course costings had now been approved by the Executive Dean.

- 18.32 Course Approval (Min 18.17)

It was noted that the 'Resource Implications' section of the CA1 form (section 18) was currently being revised to require confirmation from the Faculty that relevant central departments had been consulted.

The Advisory Group also noted that the flow chart for the planning and approval process had been revised to include the need to consult relevant central services in identifying resource needs, to have a business case and course costing prepared in conjunction with the Finance Department, to identify the requirements for the Chief Finance and Information Officer's approval of non-standard fees, and of the Executive Dean's sign-off where the costings projected a deficit.

- 18.33 Proposed MEd Higher Education Practice (with Postgraduate Diploma Exit Award) (PT) (JN) (Min 18.20)

The Chair reported that participation principles and a process for identifying staff to undertake the programme had not yet been considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee. It was noted that this had been referred to the Secretary of the Learning and Teaching Committee following the meeting of the Advisory Group in January.

18.34 PROJECTED INTAKES FOR PROPOSED PROGRAMMES

Dr Crothers reported that in future the projected student numbers included in CA1 proposal forms would be checked against the numbers in the Academic Plan. The Chair welcomed this.

18.35 BUSINESS CASES AND COURSE COSTINGS

Mrs Thompson reported that Faculties continued to fail to provide sufficient notice to Faculty Accountants to allow adequate time for the preparation of business cases and course costings.

18.36 RECEIPT OF PAPERS FOR MEETINGS

Professor Murphy stated that until now the Advisory Group had accommodated late course proposals and revisions as it had been conscious of challenging academic targets for faculties. He confirmed that from this point on, however, only in exceptional cases would papers received after the due date be considered and such papers would be held until the following meeting of the Advisory Group.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

18.37 Minimum and Maximum Cohort Sizes

The Chair reported that Professor Bartholomew had reported to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC), at its meeting on 14 March, that validation panels should in future consider and recommend to ASQEC minimum cohort sizes, as well as maximum cohort sizes, as was currently the case for courses in colleges, and that the minimum and maximum cohort sizes should also be decided by panels for the University's own courses as well as those of partner institutions. Any proposed variation from the minimum and maximum cohort sizes for internal courses should be considered by the Advisory Group in future, as was currently the case for partner institutions.

Concerns were raised that, where the minimum number of students was not achieved and a decision was taken in late August that a programme would not run, this would be very late to inform applicants, particularly international students who had already paid a deposit. This could have a negative impact on the University's reputation, particularly in the case of international students who had applied for the programme through agents.

AGREED that:

- (i) the Advisory Group should also consider this information in initial proposals and that CA1 and 2 course proposal forms be revised to include the minimum number of students and the rationale for this number;
- (ii) the business case model should include information relating to the proposed minimum, as well as projected intakes;
- (iii) the projected numbers should be consistent with the numbers in the Academic Plan;

- (iv) Professor Murphy discuss with Professor Bartholomew the implication of the minimum number of students not being achieved and how this would be managed.

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (APAG/18/9)

18.38 Proposed Single Honours Subject Strand: Journalism (APAG/18/9a)

The Advisory Group received a course proposal to offer Single Honours Journalism from September 2018. It noted that:

- Journalism was already offered as a Major subject strand;
- the expansion to a Single Honours degree was being proposed in response to feedback from current students and in light of developments within the broader Media provision;
- no additional resources were required; a new post in New Media Journalism had already been approved for the School and had been included in assessing the staffing resource for this proposal;
- there was a proposed student enrolment of 15 for the first intake, rising to 30 by the sixth intake; the proposed student numbers subsumed the existing Major numbers and it was anticipated that the part-time intake would be small;
- the proposed programme would be considered as part of the Media Studies revalidation scheduled for May 2018.

AGREED that it be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal proceed to planning and evaluation for a September 2018 start.

18.39 Programme Withdrawals

It was noted that the following programmes had been withdrawn:

Last intake 2017/18

Certificate in Ireland: History and Culture (CE)
Certificate in Irish Studies (ME)
CertHE Ireland: History and Culture (CE)
CertHE in Irish Studies (ME)
AdvCert in Ireland: History and Culture (CE)
AdvCert/AdvDip in Culture and War (CE)
BA Hons Irish History and Politics (ME)
PgDip/MA Modern Irish (BT/ME).

FACULTY OF LIFE AND HEALTH SCIENCES (APAG/18/11)

18.40 BSc Hons Health and Wellbeing (APAG/18/11a)

The Advisory Group received a course revision proposal to introduce a new named 'Global Health' pathway, from 2018/19, for students who have successfully completed two years of an undergraduate Nursing programme at Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine (NUCM). It noted that:

- the pathway would be taught in full-time mode at the Magee campus and 'Global Health' would appear in the title of the degree on the parchment and transcript;
- in addition to the four new 20-credit point, Level 6 modules which were compulsory for the Global Health pathway, students would be required to complete three existing 20-credit point compulsory modules, as well as an online 'Research Methods for Health and Social Care' bridging module in semester 3 prior to commencing the Global Health pathway; this was to meet the deficit indicated by the mapping against Year 3 of the NUCM programme; students would also undertake pre-sessional English language preparation and would be provided in advance with online lectures to enable them to familiarise themselves with local dialect and vocabulary;
- the English language requirement was IELTS 6.0;
- on completion of the programme at Ulster, students would return to China to undertake their nursing licensing examinations;
- although 'Global' was not explicit in the module titles, Mrs Mullan and Dr Cook confirmed that the content of the new modules (and the full degree) was delivered within this context and was informed by World Health Organisation strategies; the global aspect was reflected in the module learning outcomes; the pathway had been designed to reflect the outcomes of the third year of the programme at NUCM, which focused on global issues and the modules had been designed in collaboration with lecturers at NUCM to ensure that the learning outcomes of the third year of the NUCM course were met;
- the library stock was already in place;
- an intake of 20 students was anticipated in 2018/19 with plans to increase the intake over time;
- the student numbers for this programme had not yet been included in the Academic Plan;
- the pathway was not available to home students;
- the support of the external examiner had been obtained;
- the course revision form stated 'BSc Hons/PgDip/MSc Health and Wellbeing' but the proposal for the new pathway related only to the BSc Hons programme in the first instance.

AGREED that:

- (i) it be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal for a new 'Global Health' pathway be approved, subject to the course revision form being amended to clarify that the pathway would be introduced in the BSc Hons programme only and the partnership agreement and financial arrangements being finalised;
- (ii) the Faculty confirm that the global context of the curriculum was clearly reflected in the content and learning outcomes of the programme and module documentation.

ULSTER UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL (APAG/17/30)

18.41 MSc International Business (APAG/18/7a)

The Advisory Group received course revision proposals to offer the programme at Irish Times Training (ITT), Dublin in full-time and part-time modes from 2018/19 as a new

outcentre location and to introduce a new optional Advanced Practice pathway (60 credit points) available at Magee, ITT and fully online from 2018/19. It noted that:

- there was a long-standing partnership between ITT and the Ulster University Business School;
- the programme was currently delivered at Magee, QAHE (Birmingham and London) and fully online;
- the Advanced Practice pathway would not be available at QAHE, nor would it apply in the extended Master's (with Graduate Certificate exit award);
- the programme would be delivered at ITT by a mix of staff from the School of Global Business and Enterprise and Recognised Teachers;
- the other programmes delivered at ITT were delivered by the Business Institute but it was planned to operate this programme through the normal fees model;
- the Advanced Practice pathway had been developed to provide an additional option for students to further develop and enhance their employability and would be undertaken after completion of the MSc taught component; it would involve an internship or live project to the value of 60 credit points with students completing 240 credit points in total;
- the Institute of Exports and International Trade (IOE) and key employers had been consulted and accreditation from IOE was at an advanced stage;
- it was anticipated that this pathway would be particularly appealing to the international market;
- the pathway 'Advanced Practice' would be included on the award parchment; there would not be a separate Certificate award as suggested in a diagram;
- external examiner support had been obtained;
- although the Academic Plan stated an intake of 12 students for the first three intakes, with no part-time intake, the actual projected numbers were 10, 15, 20 with approximately one-third of the intakes being part-time;
- full-time and part-time students would be taught together using a block teaching model;
- a Digital Learning Resource Agreement had been completed in relation to other course enhancements.

AGREED:

- (i) that it be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposals to offer the programme at ITT, Dublin as an outcentre from 2018/19 and to introduce an optional Advanced Practice pathway from 2018/19 be approved, subject to receipt and sign-off by the Chair of a business case;
- (iii) that Dr Crothers liaise with the Director of Faculty Operations regarding the Academic Plan.

18.42 MBA (Non-Executive version) (APAG/18/7b)

The Advisory Group received course revision proposals to offer the full-time, non-executive version of the MBA at the Magee campus and to amend existing entry criteria wording from 2018/19. It noted that:

- the MBA (non-executive) was currently delivered in full-time mode at Jordanstown and QAHE (London) and the Faculty wished to add Magee as a location for the programme, should potential international partnership opportunities arise which

would be better suited to co-ordination and management from the MBA team at Magee;

- the support of the external examiner had been obtained;
- it was proposed to amend the entry criteria wording from “Applicants should normally have two years’ relevant work experience” to “Applicants should normally have two years’ relevant work experience, however, applicants will be considered on an individual basis”;
- criteria regarding academic achievement and language requirements remained unchanged;
- the proposal to amend the entry requirements was based on feedback from the Associate Dean (Global Engagement), the Global Recruitment and Engagement team and QAHE that the work experience requirement was not in line with many of the competing UK HEIs which did not require it; a review had been undertaken of websites of 20 MBA programmes at other institutions, with only six stating specific work experience requirement;
- although the inclusion of the word “normally” already provided flexibility, recruitment agencies did not appear to interpret it as such and stipulated that students were required to have two years’ work experience, which international students rarely had.

Mr Faulkner raised a concern that the proposal to amend the wording of the entry criteria represented a departure from the National Subject Benchmark standard which was part of the UK Quality Code, to which the University subscribed. The current regulations reflected the national benchmark standard, whilst also allowing flexibility through the inclusion of the word “normally”.

AGREED that:

- (i) it be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal to offer the full-time, non-executive version of the MBA at the Magee campus be approved, subject to a business case being provided for approval by the Chair;
- (ii) it not be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal to amend the existing entry criteria wording be approved and that the Faculty be asked to reconsider how the existing criteria were interpreted.

18.43 ENROLMENTS ON NEW PROGRAMMES VALIDATED IN 2016/17 (APAG/18/12)

The Advisory Group received a statement of enrolments on new programmes validated in 2016/17 for a 2017 start against targets as stated on the course proposal forms. It noted that:

- this statement was received by the Advisory Group to help it reflect on the success of Faculties in meeting their proposed enrolments for the proposals which were recommended to proceed to evaluation;
- approximately only half of the programmes had recruited;
- the start date for the Diploma in Foundation Studies (with named pathways) had been postponed until September 2018 and the Certificate in Foundation Studies in Music had also been postponed.

18.44 ASKING GRADE AMENDMENTS (APAG/18/13)

The Advisory Group received a request from the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences to increase the tariff from the current range of 220-260 to 240-300 from September 2019 intake for the following programmes offered by the School of Geography and Environmental Sciences:

BSc Hons Environmental Science
BSc Hons Environmental Science with Education
BSc Hons Environmental Science with Psychology
BSc Hons Geography
BSc Hons Geography with Education
BSc Hons Geography with Psychology.

It was noted that:

- in September 2017 only four of the intake had achieved a tariff below 240;
- the School wished to increase the tariffs as they were lower than those of Queen's University Belfast, which affected prospective students' perceptions and choices;
- the proposed increase was expected to have minimal impact on widening participation;
- the tariff range would be advertised as CCC-BBB;
- where amendments to admissions requirements are being proposed, Faculty colleagues are asked to express in the new UCAS tariff regime making specific reference also to the corresponding asking grades.

The Faculty had also submitted a request for separate UCAS codes to be re-instated for four year courses to highlight availability of placement years. It was noted that this was not a matter for the Advisory Group and should be referred to the Admissions Service.

AGREED that the proposal to increase the tariff range asking grades be approved.

Duration: 1 hour 25 minutes

23 March 2018

AGF/AG