

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

ACADEMIC PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2018 by video-conferencing

PRESENT

Professor B P Murphy (Chair), Dr S Crothers, Professor M Durkin, Mr A G Faulkner, Mrs C McCarthy, Mrs R McEvoy, Mr D McGivern, Mr S Mottershead, Mrs J Peden, Mrs E Thompson

APOLOGIES

Professor P Bartholomew

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs A Garland (Secretariat), Professor A McKillop (Mins 18.112 – 18.116), Dr C Kelly (Min 18.114), Professor D Brennan (Min 18.116), Mr S McCullough (Min 18.116), Professor H Farley (Mins 18.117 – 18.121), Dr D Cummins (Mins 18.117 – 18.121)

18.92 MEMBERSHIP

The Chair welcomed Professor Mark Durkin, Executive Dean of the Ulster University Business School, and Mr Stuart Mottershead, Head of Strategic Marketing, to the Advisory Group. The Chair thanked Professor Liam Maguire for his valuable contribution to the Advisory Group.

18.93 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Academic Planning Advisory Group held on 31 May 2018 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

18.94 BSc Hons Health and Wellbeing (Mins 18.40, 18.57)

It was noted that the partnership agreement and course costing had now been received and the proposal to introduce a new named 'Global Health' pathway, from 2018/19, had been authorised in CMS.

18.95 Proposed PgCert/PgDip Intellectual Property Law and Practice (FT/PT) (Min 18.63)

It was noted that the start date for the programme had been postponed to 2019/20.

18.96 Proposed MSc Linguistics and TESOL (FT/PT) (BT) (Min 18.64)

It was noted that the programme would be offered in full-time mode only.

18.97 Undergraduate Honours Subject: Chinese (Minor) and Business with Chinese Combination (FT) (ME) (Mins 18.68, 18.83)

It was noted that the Executive Dean of the Ulster University Business School had confirmed, with the agreement of the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, that the proposals to reinstate the subject of Chinese and relocate it at Magee from 2019/20 and to offer the Major/Minor combination of Business with Chinese at the Magee campus would not be progressed.

18.98 Proposed FdSc Management Practice (with Specialisms) (PT) (JN/Outcentres) (Min 18.78)

It was noted that the business case had been approved by the Chair on behalf of the Advisory Group.

18.99 Proposed PgDip/MSc Agri-Food and Global Competitiveness (PT) (JN/BT) (Min 18.79)

It was noted that confirmation of revised course costings and approval by Finance of the premium fee had not yet been received. The Faculty had confirmed that the library resources had been revisited and that the start date for the programme was likely to be January 2020, and not January 2019, as the staff resources to deliver it were not yet in place.

18.100 Proposed BSc Hons Business Studies (FT) and MBA (FT) at Myanmar Institute of Business (MIB) (Min 18.81)

It was noted that the Ulster University Business School had advised that the proposals would not be progressed.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

18.101 Course Costing Methodology – Library stock

The Chair reported that the course costing methodology did not fully account for additional library resource requirements which should be in place for the commencement of a new course. He would meet with Mrs Peden and Mrs Thompson to discuss how this should be addressed.

AGREED that a report on this matter be considered at the next meeting.

18.102 Course Costing Template

Mrs Thompson advised that the course costing template would be amended to remove expectation of the signature of the Associate Dean (Education) as their approval was confirmed when proposals were submitted through the CMS approval process. The Executive Dean signature would still be required where course costings showed a cumulative deficit.

18.103 COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES (APAG/18/21)

The Advisory Group received a copy of the Principles and Objectives associated with the Collaborative Strategy which had been approved by the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee at its meeting on 6 June 2018. It noted that:

- the Principles and Objectives aligned to the University's Strategic Plan and the KPIs in the balanced scorecard;
- the Principles applied to both local and international partnerships but the Objectives related to local partnerships only;
- the Principles should be observed in CA2 course proposals, in particular Principle 3 relating to Faculty sponsorship and Principle 6 relating to a sustainable business plan.

18.104 REPORT FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM COHORT SIZES (APAG/18/22)

The Advisory Group received the report from the Task and Finish Group on Minimum and Maximum Cohort Sizes. The Task and Finish Group had been established to explore the implications of minimum and maximum cohort sizes, building on previous discussions and decisions made at meetings of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee and the Academic Planning Advisory Group. The Task and Finish Group had drawn up policy guidelines on minimum and maximum cohort sizes for internal and external (validated) provision (Mins 18.56 and 18.37 refer).

Professor Murphy explained that intake sizes were treated as indicative, and that the guidelines allowed flexibility and discretion at the time of confirmation of offers if needed.

Mrs McCarthy expressed concern that the application of the policy could be problematic. She advised that the majority of new postgraduate programmes did not meet the specified minimum cohort and queried at what point it should be decided that a programme would not run. Mrs McCarthy suggested that a caveat around reputational damage when a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) had already been issued should be written into the policy. She reminded the Advisory Group that, as well as considering the academic aspect of protecting the student experience, it was necessary to ensure that the commercial aspect was taken into account and she considered that new business should be protected and supported to grow.

Professor Durkin expressed concern that a financial penalty would be incurred if a programme did not meet the projected numbers, particularly in the early years. Mrs Thompson advised that, in terms of the costing methodology, proposals were to be costed over the period and realistic figures should be used for the initial recruitment phase.

It was noted that the policy was more strict for partner institutions where penalties for under-recruitment and over-recruitment would be applied. It was also noted that permanent increases or variations in cohort sizes should be formally approved.

AGREED that:

- (i) the policy guidelines for internal and external (validated) provision be endorsed for consideration by the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee at its meeting on 22 October, subject to Professor Murphy liaising with Mrs McCarthy regarding guideline (xi);
- (ii) guidance on indicative maximum and minimum cohort sizes be included by Finance on the course costing template with reference to the policy document;

- (iii) a Banner field be created by Planning to capture indicative maximum and minimum numbers from the CA1/2/3 process, and projected minimum numbers and actual intakes be monitored by Planning.

18.105 PROPOSED PRINCIPLES GOVERNING CHAIR'S ACTION (APAG/18/23)

The Chair expressed concern that collective decision-making was being compromised by the large number of requests from Faculties for Chair's action on proposals which missed consideration by the Advisory Group. A set of principles relating to Chair's action had therefore been drawn up. The Chair proposed that future requests for Chair's action should be accompanied by a supporting statement which addressed the principles.

A change to the scheduling of APAG meetings was also proposed so that the earliest meeting in each academic session should normally be no less than two weeks ahead of the registration period. Thereafter, meetings would continue to be held every two months.

AGREED that the proposed Principles Governing Chair's action be accepted and that the change to the scheduling of the first meeting of the session be implemented for 2019/20.

COURSE PLANNING

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (APAG/18/24)

18.106 Access Diploma in Social Science at Northern Regional College (FT/PT) (APAG/18/24a)

The Advisory Group noted that Chair's action had been taken to approve a proposal to offer the programme, in full-time and part-time mode, at the College's Ballymoney campus from 2018/19. It noted that:

- the proposal was a result of the general growth of access provision across the College;
- many students taking the course at the Coleraine campus had indicated that they would have been interested in studying at the Ballymoney campus had this option been available;
- external examiner support had been obtained;
- the Faculty supported the proposal and had confirmed that appropriate physical resources were in place;
- two additional members of staff were to join the teaching team;
- the proposal had been approved by Chair's action on the basis that there was clear evidence that the Faculty had completed thorough due diligence, particularly on resources for the new site;
- the Faculty had subsequently advised that the programme would not run at the Ballymoney campus until 2019/20.

AGREED that Chair's action be endorsed to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal be approved.

18.107 Certificate in Community Youth Studies (APAG/18/24b)

The Advisory Group noted that Chair's action had been taken to approve a proposal and business case to offer the Certificate in Community Youth Studies at Youth Action NI at East Belfast Community Development Agency (Outcentre), from 2018/19. It noted that:

- this was a one-year course and, based on community demand, it was anticipated that recruitment would take place every other year;
- as Youth Action NI provided the teaching, the Financial model had been based on the fee income split 40% Ulster University and 60% Youth Action NI;
- staff of Youth Action NI already taught the course for the Faculty at Magee and another Belfast outcentre location;
- external examiner support had been obtained;
- students for the new location had already been enrolled on an existing course code.

The Chair reported his expectation that under normal circumstances this proposal would have come to a meeting of the Advisory Group. The Chair highlighted the sub-optimal timing of the submission for Chair's approval within one week of the meeting of the Advisory Group and within days of registration and course start. He stated that this had raised the prospect of reputational damage in enacting the most appropriate decision and had therefore compromised the decision-making process.

AGREED that:

- (i) Chair's action be endorsed to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal be approved;
- (ii) the Faculty liaise with the Library to advise what resources were required;
- (iii) the Faculty liaise with Planning regarding the course code for the new location.

18.108 Programme Withdrawals

It was noted that the following programme had been withdrawn:

Last intake 2018/19.

FdA Interactive Design (FT) at Northern Regional College (Newtownabbey campus).

FACULTY OF COMPUTING, ENGINEERING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
(APAG/18/25)

18.109 FdEng Civil Engineering at Belfast Metropolitan College (Millfield campus)

The Advisory Group noted that the Faculty had approved an increase in the projected part-time intake to 24 in each of the next five years.

18.110 MSc Data Science (FT/PT) (JN/ME)

The Advisory Group noted that the Faculty had approved course revisions to withdraw the full-time mode at Jordanstown and to remove the January intake for the programme (Min 17.138 refers). Ownership of the programme had been transferred to the School of Computing, Engineering and Intelligent Systems.

18.111 Programme Withdrawals

It was noted that the following programme had been withdrawn:

Last intake 2017/18

FdSc Computing Infrastructure at Belfast Metropolitan College (Castlereagh campus).

FACULTY OF LIFE AND HEALTH SCIENCES (APAG/18/26)

18.112 Postgraduate Certificate in Education for Nurses and Midwives (PT) (JN) (APAG/18/26a)

The Advisory Group noted that Chair's action had been taken to approve a proposal to change the title of the programme to Postgraduate Certificate in Education for Healthcare Professionals, to reflect the programme's new inter-professional focus, from September 2018. It noted that:

- the change in title and content was at the request of the commissioners and was supported by the external examiner;
- the revised course would be shared between the School of Nursing and the School of Health Sciences;
- the revised course had been commissioned for 16 places in September 2018.

AGREED that Chair's action be endorsed to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal be approved.

18.113 BSc Hons Biomedical and Healthcare Sciences (PT) (DL) (APAG/18/26b)

The Advisory Group noted that Chair's action had been taken to approve a proposal to change the title of the programme to BSc Hons Biomedical Science (Life Sciences) from September 2018. It noted that:

- the change in title had been proposed as a result of a recommendation from the Institute of Biomedical Science at the accreditation event in February;
- the proposal was supported by the external examiners and current students.

AGREED that Chair's action be endorsed to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal be approved.

18.114 BSc Hons Stratified Medicine (FT) (ME) PgCert/PgDip/MSc Stratified Medicine (FT/PT) (DL) (APAG/18/26c)

The Advisory Group received notification from the Faculty that a change in title to 'Personalised Medicine' would be proposed at revalidation in November 2018. It noted that:

- the Faculty had consulted widely on the title and that the term 'stratified' was now almost exclusively used in the UK; the wider scientific community had adopted the terms 'Personalised' and/or 'Precision' medicine;
- the Faculty hoped that the name change would increase the international reach of the programmes and that the new title would better reflect the objectives of the programmes thereby increasing interest and demand.

AGREED that it be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the change in title be approved, subject to approval by the revalidation panel.

18.115 PgCert/PgDip/MSc Nursing (FT/PT) (JN/ME) (APAG/18/26d)

The Advisory Group noted that Chair's action had been taken to approve a proposal to introduce a new Advanced Nursing Practice pathway in Adult Medicine and Older People Care, from 2018/19, subject to:

- (i) the learning outcomes and assessment regime of the new modules being aligned to the curriculum design principles, as part of the forthcoming revalidation;
- (ii) the course costing methodology being conducted for the new pathway or the suite of programmes, whichever is the most efficient, and being forwarded for approval by the Chair.

It noted that:

- the proposal was in response to a request from the Department of Health;
- external examiner support had been obtained.

AGREED that Chair's action be endorsed to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal be approved.

18.116 BSc Hons Sports Studies (FT) (JN)
BSc Hons Sport and Exercise Sciences (FT) (JN) (APAG/18/26e)

The Advisory Group received a proposal to reduce the asking grades for the degrees from AAB or equivalent to BBB or equivalent and to introduce an additional assessment as part of the selection process for entry from 2019/20. It noted that:

- the proposal aimed to address ongoing concerns about student attendance and engagement, which had been flagged over the past two years in Special Measures in the Continuous Assurance and Enhancement Cycle;
- the additional assessment for entry would take the form of a written piece of work which would be set and marked by School staff (to be piloted with University students in November for use in February 2019);
- the School of Sport was of the view that an intervention in advance of entry was required to recruit suitably qualified, motivated students; this was one of many measures being taken to address attrition;
- a high proportion of students entered with BTEC qualifications;
- students struggled with academic writing and basic mathematics and a number of programme-level interventions to support student progression in Year 1 had been implemented.

Mr Faulkner raised concern regarding the timing of the change in entry criteria as the standard had already been published for 2019 entry. Professor McKillop advised that the Faculty would work closely with Admissions to ensure schools and applicants were aware of the change. Mr McGivern suggested that the Faculty use Edlink to communicate the change in entry criteria to careers teachers.

AGREED that:

- (i) it be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal to reduce the asking grades and implement an additional assessment as part of the criteria for entry from 2019/20 be approved;

- (ii) the impact of the change to entry criteria on widening access be monitored by the Faculty in collaboration with the WAP unit in ADDL.

ULSTER UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL (APAG/18/27)

18.117 MSc Business Development and Innovation (APAG/18/27a and APAG/18/27b)

The Advisory Group noted that Chair's action had been taken to approve a proposal to offer the programme at China Resources University (CRU), as an outcentre, in full-time mode from January 2019, subject to the following matters identified by the Chair being addressed and reported to the Advisory Group:

- (i) that the Head of School liaise with the University Librarian to consider international copyright risk, allowance for Library resources and e-books, potential for revised reading lists or CRU Library stock as appropriate mitigations;
- (ii) that remote access to Ulster University VLE and Library from CRU be tested for accessibility and quality;
- (iii) that consideration be given to the usefulness of a Digital Learning Resource Agreement drawn up with ADDL to support the significant remote academic management, asynchronous support and assessment through VLE;
- (iv) that consideration be given to how a high quality student experience will be ensured at an indicative SSR of 90:1;
- (v) that consideration be given to liaison with CHERP on the potential for on-going curriculum design support for the TNE context and block delivery.

The Advisory Group noted that:

- feedback from The Confucius Institute and meetings between the Business School's senior management team and CRU had indicated that there was demand for the proposal;
- the Faculty proposed to deliver the full programme, over one calendar year, in-country ('Flying Faculty'), with the exception of the Management Project which would be supervised remotely; modules would be delivered in blocks and timed to ensure that Jordanstown students were not adversely affected;
- the programme would be delivered and assessed by Ulster staff with student support, administration and marketing support from CRU;
- students would have access to online materials on Blackboard and at CRU's learning and resource centre; students would also have access to the University's Library resources and would be supported by the University's Business and Management team;
- external examiner support had been obtained.

The Advisory Group considered the report from the Ulster University Business School in relation to the matters raised by the Chair (APAG/18/27a). It noted that:

- the start date would now be September 2019;
- the Head of School was liaising with the University Librarian;
- the Faculty Sub-Librarian had confirmed that he had contacted the librarian at CRU and that local access to the University's electronic sources had been checked and found to be working;

- the Office for Digital Learning had agreed to run bespoke sessions for the academic team, with the first session focussing on remote academic management, support and assessment through the VLE [Secretary's note: access to the VLE from CRU has now been confirmed (YouTube is blocked and should not be used as a learning resource within the VLE)];
- the projected intake for Year 1 was 20, so the SSR would be 20:1; the course costings had however been prepared on the basis of SSR 90:1;
- the School would be contacting CHERP for advice and input.

Mrs Peden stated that the Library required information regarding the Aggregate Offshore Record and how the course was coded in order to determine if there would be any additional costs for electronic licences.

Dr Cummins thanked Mr McFall, Faculty Sub-Librarian, on behalf of the School for his support.

It was noted that confirmation of SLT approval of the new partner for outcentre delivery had not yet been received.

AGREED that:

- (i) Chair's action be endorsed to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal be approved, subject to
 - (a) confirmation of SLT approval [Secretary's note: this has subsequently been received];
 - (b) a copy of the Agreement with CRU being received;
- (ii) Mrs Peden liaise with Dr Crothers regarding the coding information required by the Library.

18.118 Proposed Postgraduate Certificate in Global Capital Markets (Financial Risk Management) (PT) (JN/Irish Times Training (Dublin)) (APAG/18/27c)

The Advisory Group noted that Chair's action had been taken to approve a proposal and business case to offer a new programme at Jordanstown and Irish Times Training (Dublin) (Outcentre) from September 2018 without evaluation. It noted that:

- the proposal had been considered by Chair's action in view of the urgent operational commitments and evidence of demand;
- the proposal was exemplary in terms of due diligence carried out with regard to resources, market research and consultation, and evidence presented for Chair's action;
- the proposal did not require evaluation in view of the fact that it derived from the PgDip/MSc Global Capital Markets which had been evaluated in June 2018;
- The Department for the Economy had provided funding for the programme to be offered in Northern Ireland for employees of the local financial and professional services sector and it was projected that 20 students would enrol;
- Funding had also been received from Springboard+ for students to complete the programme and it was expected that 30 students would enrol in Dublin;
- the CA1 course proposal form had noted an intake of 50 but the course costing had been based on 40 students (10 at Ulster, 30 in Dublin).

AGREED that:

- (i) Chair's action be endorsed to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal be approved from September 2018 without evaluation;
- (ii) the Faculty clarify the intake sizes.

18.119 Master of Business Administration (PT) (Executive version) (APAG/18/27d)

The Advisory Group received course proposals and business cases to offer the part-time MBA (Executive version) programme and stand-alone 15-credit point module BMG850 ('mini' MBA) at Axiom, Chicago (Outcentre), from 2018/19. It noted that:

- the Ulster University Business School and Axiom had collaborated in 2016 on a co-designed 'mini MBA' module (15 credit points) for Axiom staff and that a successful pilot had been held in November 2017 with staff from Poland, Belfast and USA attending at Ulster University;
- a 'Flying Faculty' outcentre model would be used with current staff for a cohort of 20 students;
- it was anticipated that around 25 students per annum would undertake the mini MBA module, with a minimum of 20 students in year one;
- students would be in continuous registration and the Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma were exit awards only;
- a distinct course code was requested for the 'Mini MBA' cohort;
- the location for modules had been recorded in CMS as 'Axiom, Chicago or New York' but there was no reference to New York on the CA1 course proposal form; the Executive Dean confirmed that the Faculty would deliver at whichever office Axiom chose but that all students would be in the one location;
- no information had been provided on the actual location / classroom environment or about the Library and VLE arrangements; the Executive Dean and Associate Dean (Education) confirmed that the Faculty had no concerns regarding the resources at Axiom;
- support of the external examiner had been obtained;
- the start date was likely to be December 2018 / January 2019, but this was subject to confirmation.

It also noted that current procedures expected a limited due-diligence report and approval of new outcentres by SLT.

AGREED that:

- (i) Chair's action be permitted to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposals be approved, subject to:
 - (a) SLT approval of in-country outcentre;
 - (b) verification of the adequacy of the resources at Axiom to support delivery and the student experience;
 - (c) testing of VLE and Library access;
 - (d) confirmation of the start date;
- (ii) information be provided to the Library in relation to the Aggregate Offshore Record by Planning;

(iii) the Library consider TNE copyright implications.

18.120 Programme Suspensions

It was noted that intake to the following programmes at Southern Regional College had been suspended:

No intake 2018/19

FdSc International Hospitality and Tourism (FT) (Newry campus);
FdSc International Travel and Tourism (FT/PT) (Newry campus);
BSc Hons Accounting and Management (PT) (Newry campus).

18.121 Programme Withdrawals

It was noted that the following programme had been withdrawn:

Last intake 2017/18

FdSc International Culinary Arts at Southern Regional College (Newry campus).

18.122 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS (APAG/18/29)

The Advisory Group noted that Chair's action had been taken to extend the list of English language qualifications accepted from India as proof of competency and meeting the University's English language requirement.

AGREED that Chair's action be endorsed to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal be approved.

18.123 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP (APAG/18/30)

The Advisory Group reviewed the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Group. It was noted that Professor Bartholomew was currently reviewing these in the context of the overall Education portfolio and that revised Terms of Reference and Membership would be received at the next meeting of the Advisory Group in November.

Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes

2 October 2018

AGF/AG