

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/19/1e)

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

13 March 2019

Agenda Item 4.5

EXTENSION OF APPROVAL

Faculty of Life and Health Sciences

Postgraduate Certificate Independent Prescribing and MSc Advanced Clinical Optometry

COVER SHEET

Action is required of the Committee as indicated below.

To consider a request from the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences for a one-year extension of approval.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

REQUEST TO EXTEND APPROVAL AND POSTPONE REVALIDATION

Form CA6b)

SECTION A: FACULTY REQUEST

FACULTY: Life and Health Sciences

SCHOOL: Biomedical Sciences

SUBJECT UNIT NUMBER AND NAME: Unit 28Db

MONTH/YEAR CURRENTLY SCHEDULED: Jan 2020

PERIOD OF EXTENSION REQUESTED: One year
(e.g. one year to include the September 2018 intake)

COURSE(S): Pg Certificate Independent Prescribing
MSc Advanced Clinical Optometry (due in 20121)
(Identify specific courses unless the whole unit)

REASON FOR REQUEST: A new external examiner has been proposed for both programmes to start in 2019/20. The proposed one year extension would allow the new External Examiner time to understand the university systems, course structure and programme assessments. In addition, the current external examiner has changed roles and has moved from an academic environment to a pharmaceutical company. By permitting this extension it will allow the new External Examiner time to familiarise himself with the University policies and procedures prior to the next revalidation.

CURRENCY AND VALIDITY:

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

The curriculum remains current and valid. This course, one of only five in the UK provides qualified Optometrists with an opportunity to increase their scope of practice. The programme forms one part of a qualification in independent prescribing which is becoming increasingly common across the UK. An increasing number of Optometry vacancies, particularly hospital positions include this qualification as essential criteria. This course is accredited and validated by the regulatory body, the General Optical Council (GOC) who have restricted the number of places on the programme to a maximum of 15.

Extracts from External Examiner's report (2017/18) (available if required):

As with my findings from previous years, I found the teaching materials and course content to be of a high standard. The course clearly meets the General Optical Council requirements.

The standard of this course is of an exceptional level, and is testimony to Dr McClelland's drive and passion for the subject matter.

As I have commented before, this post-graduate course will attract highly motivated individuals who are often high achievers, and this is reflected in the assessment marks awarded.

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)

The programme was accredited and approved for an intake in January 2016. A follow up visit in April 2016 reported that any outstanding conditions had been met and the programme was approved until 2020. The Final GOC report is available from the Course Director if required. A summary can be seen at:

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=2ahUKEwjEytC4nJXgAhVNQxUIHY_PB7AQFjABegQIBxAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.optical.org%2Fdownload.cfm%3Fdocid%3DFAE49C71-428C-4617-82F6BD59349C74D1&usq=AOvVaw3ZutOMyBM6k_lhtfpaYAl6

The External Examiner has consistently praised the high quality and standards of the programme.

Extracts from External Examiner's reports:

I was particularly impressed with how the course was structured and delivered, and felt that the range of assessment methods was varied and interesting. It is clear that the course director has put a lot of thought into the structure of the course and how best to deliver the teaching & assessment to the students so as to maximise engagement. (2016)

I feel that the standards of teaching material on the course are high, and the methods of assessment & their transparency exceed that of other institutions in my experience, both as a lecturer (City University) and as a student (Aston/Manchester). (2016)

The teaching materials, online resources and coursework assignments is of an extremely high standard. The course uses a variety of teaching and assessment methods, and as such is very likely to keep the students engaged throughout the 2 years. The course content meets the General optical Council requirements. (2017)

Based on my previous experience at the City University, London (where I was senior lecturer and in charge of a number of MSc modules) and my experience of taking a similar course myself at the University of Manchester/Aston, I can confidently say that the programme at Ulster is probably one of the best in the country. A real testimony to Dr McClelland's dedication and hard work.

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)

As described above, the regulatory body, the General Optical Council approved the programme for four years and are due to visit again in 2020. It is not a requirement that the accreditation visit is held at the same time as the revalidation.

DEMAND: There is a high demand for the 15 available places on this programme both from NI and GB. As this is a fully online programme, Optometrists can undertake this qualification alongside other work and family commitments.

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

FACULTY CONFIRMATION:

Aine McKee

SIGNED: _____
Associate Dean (Education)

DATE: 30 January 2019

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

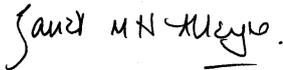
SECTION B: ACADEMIC OFFICE COMMENTS:

The Academic Office supports the proposed extension of approval as the external examiner reports received to date indicate sufficient assurance of the maintenance of standards, the MSc course was initially approved until 20/21 (but the revalidation approval period was shortened by a year in line with that previously granted for the PgCert Independent Prescribing) and because the extension of approval would bring the courses into line with the scheduled revalidation of the undergraduate course in Optometry.



SIGNED: _____ DATE: 31/1/2019 _____
Academic Policy and Standards Manager

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



SIGNED: _____ DATE: 31/01.2019 _____
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 Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) on behalf of ASQEC)

DECISION: Approve (Yes/No)

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)

DATE REPORTED TO ASQEC:

Academic Office
July 2018