

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/21/2f)

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

11 March 2021

Agenda Item 5.4.3

COVER SHEET

EXTENSION OF APPROVAL

Units 31B and 31Bi: Distributed Education Board

Presenter: Professor B Murphy

To consider a proposal for a three-year extension to the period of approval for the Diploma in International Foundation studies (with pathways).

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

REQUEST TO EXTEND APPROVAL AND POSTPONE REVALIDATION

Form CA6b)

SECTION A: FACULTY REQUEST

FACULTY: Access, Digital and Distributed Education (ADDL)

SCHOOL/Department: Distributed Educational Board

REVALIDATION UNIT NUMBER AND NAME:

30B International Foundation Studies (UU Delivery)
30Bi International Foundation Studies (Doha Delivery)

MONTH/YEAR CURRENTLY SCHEDULED:

30B (UU) September 2021
30Bi (Doha) March 2022

PERIOD OF EXTENSION REQUESTED:

(eg one year to include the September 2018 intake)

Extension requested to Academic Year 24/25 for both 30B and 30Bi programmes

COURSE(S):

(Identify specific courses unless the whole unit)

30B – (UU) Diploma in International Foundation Studies (with Pathways in STE and BAHSS) FT
30Bi – (Doha) Diploma in International Foundation Studies (BAHSS Pathway only) FT and PT

REASON FOR REQUEST:

The 30B Ulster Diploma in International Foundation Studies (with Pathways in STE and BAHSS) course was validated in September 2018. Following an out-centre approval, the 30Bi Doha Diploma in International Foundation Studies (BAHSS Pathway only) was validated June 2019.

The University accepted its first cohort of students to 30B in academic year 2019/20. When the pandemic began many students returned to their home countries (March 2020) and participated online in accordance with the University's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of the continuing pandemic, the second academic cycle (academic year 20/21) is also being conducted online (students in home countries).

Course 30Bi at City University College, Doha accepted its first cohort of students in academic year 2020/21 and is being conducted through blended learning (online and on campus in accordance with Qatari government Covid-19 pandemic regulations).

To date there has not been a full academic cycle delivered on campus at either Ulster or Doha. As a result, quality evaluation is limited. For these reasons, we would respectfully request that revalidation is extended to a point where we could expect at least three academic cycles to have been completed

on campus. Assuming that the academic cycle will return to normal in 2021/22, we would suggest therefore that revalidation might best be planned for academic year 2024/25.

In the meantime, the usual quality assurance and enhancement measures will be overseen by the Course Team, Course Committee and Distributed Education Board.

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 for both Pathways remains valid and current. Curriculum has been adapted to include recent global events – Covid19 Pandemic within modules FCE014 Project Based Learning research and FCE101 Exploring Cultural Identities (cultural responses).

The Course Director has encouraged recent re-engagement from Faculty, particularly AHSS, who are devising Humanities modules which may expand the foundation programme/year offering. The Course Director is working with Faculty to add a developing number of Integrated Foundation Years opportunities so that prospective students can avail of a wider offering of courses with greater security of a longer VISA.

Planned delivery of curriculum, in academic years 19/20 and 20/21, has been amended to offer the greatest support to young international students, for whom this course has been their initial introduction to learning and living in the UK, since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Remarks from recent External Examiner report July 2020. External Examiner is Kerry Tavakoli from the University of St Andrews, Scotland.

The assessments provide evidence of the students' language and language use developed well from the beginning to the end of the course.

All the information I received was comprehensive and clear. I had access to the VLE, so was able to study both teaching materials, assessments and student papers, and had opportunities to discuss everything with the course leader.

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)

We continue to employ Team Meetings, Staff Student Consultative Committee meetings, working closely with Partner college and Faculty colleagues to ensure curriculum is of highest quality and meaningful for all students.

Forthcoming meeting planned with students from 19/20 cohort and the CD in order to understand experience and gain insight – to ensure best practice.

Remarks from recent External Examiner report July 2020. External Examiner is Kerry Tavakoli from the University of St Andrews, Scotland.

Marking was rigorous, impartial and related well to the criteria. There was a reasonable spread of marks, and excellent feedback was provided.

The quality of the students is generally high – there were a couple of exceptions. Those who achieved good grades are clearly well-prepared for undergraduate study.

I have been external examiner in two previous institutions, and work in one myself. I can confirm that the standards of the programme are well in line with these others I am familiar with.

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)

Not Applicable

DEMAND:

Student numbers have been lower than the academic plan however there has not been a single academic cycle which has not been disrupted by Covid-19. Current numbers for 30B – 8 students, Current numbers for 30Bi – 8 students.

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

FACULTY CONFIRMATION:



SIGNED: _____ DATE: 25 February 2021 _____
Associate Dean (Education)

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

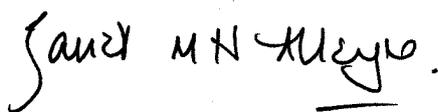
SECTION B: ACADEMIC OFFICE COMMENTS:

The revalidation for these units was scheduled for 2021/22 and the request seeks an extension to approval until 2024/25 (three years). The Diploma in International Foundation Studies (with pathways) was approved for a September 2018 start but actually had its first intake in 2019/20 and has not yet had a graduating cohort. The request is made on the basis of a delayed start, that the cohorts have been small and that recruitment and particularly delivery have been affected by the pandemic such that a later date for revalidation would be more effective in terms of the Course Team's evaluation of changes to and further development of the programme. The external examiner reported in 2019/20 and was very supportive of the quality and standards of the programme and makes some recommendations regarding assessment methods and the order of module delivery.



SIGNED: _____ DATE: __1.3.21_____
Academic Policy and Standards Manager

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



4 March 2021
SIGNED: _____ 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