

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

ACADEMIC PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2018 by video-conferencing

PRESENT

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

APOLOGY:

Professor L Maguire

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs C G Avery (Secretariat), Dr G Armstrong (Min 18.16), Dr D Cummins (Min 18.17), Dr R Curran (Min 18.20), Professor P McGowan (Min 18.17), Mr T Moruzzi (Min 18.18), Ms L O'Connor (Min 18.21)

18.1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Academic Planning Advisory Group held on 21 November 2017 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the following amendments:

17.129 Proposed PgCert/PgDip/MSc in Development and Co-Production of Social Care Research (PT) (JN)

Fifth bullet point to read "part of unit 26G" (not 28G).

17.143 Proposed FdSc Paramedic Practice (FT) at Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Care Trust (NIAS HSCT)

Fifth bullet point to read "graduates of the programme would be eligible to progress to the University's BSc Hons Health and Wellbeing or BSc Hons Applied Health Studies" (not BSc Hons Applied Medical Studies).

MATTERS ARISING

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

The proposal to offer the course at HKU SPACE (outcentre) had been approved subject to Finance's confirmation of the proposed fee. It was noted that Mrs Thompson had advised that, as the proposed fee deviated from the standard fee, the Ulster University Business School had been asked to provide evidence of approval.

18.3 Evidence of Demand (Min 17.126)

It was noted that Section 10 'Evidence of Demand' of the CA1 course proposal form had been amended to request confirmation of Faculty engagement with the Marketing and Communications Directorate.

18.4 MSc Energy Storage (Min 17.135)

The Chair advised that the Faculty had still to clarify whether a linked PgCert/PgDip/MSc or a Master's with exit awards was proposed, and the anticipated distribution of numbers between full-time, part-time and distance learning students and to complete a Digital Learning Resource Agreement.

18.5 PgDip and MSc Biomedical Engineering (FT/PT) (JN) (Min 17.137)

It was noted that a revised proposal to introduce a January entry point for full-time and part-time modes from January 2018 had not been submitted in CMS, and confirmation of external examiner support had not been provided.

The Faculty had confirmed that there was no intake in January 2018 and that it intended to re-submit the proposal for January intakes for future years.

18.6 MSc Data Science (FT/PT) (JN/ME) (Min 17.138)

The Advisory Group noted that confirmation of external examiner support for a January intake had now been received.

18.7 Proposed FdSc Food and Drink Manufacture (PT) at the College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) (Loughry campus) (Min 17.142)

It was noted that the Ulster University Business School had confirmed its endorsement of the proposal from the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences and that there was no competition or conflict with its proposal to offer the Advanced Certificate in Management Practice at Moy Park as a University outcentre (Min 17.147 refers).

18.8 BSc Hons and MSc Sports Coaching (Min 17.144)

It was noted that confirmation of external examiner support for the change in title of the programme to 'Sports Coaching and Performance' from 2018/19 had now been received.

18.9 Advanced Diploma in Managing the Customer Contact (Min 17.148)

It was 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.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

18.10 Course Costings

Professor Murphy reminded members of the importance of the business cases and course costings which accompanied course proposals in providing evidence of

appropriate due diligence. It was emphasised that the Advisory Group did not have responsibility for approving costings which were underwritten by Faculties. Its interest was to ensure that realistic costings had been undertaken, and, where these revealed an ongoing deficit in full economic projections, that the Faculty has taken account of the implications in its financial planning. For this reason, two proposals which were received at the meeting and which had been approved by Chair's Action had required explicit confirmation of Executive Dean's approval.

Professor Murphy noted that course costings would be discussed later on the agenda with a proposed new summary template (see min 18.21). Professor Bartholomew reported that work to refine the costings model was ongoing and that a Finance workshop was scheduled for February.

He also questioned the suggestion that proposals from the Business Institute, as a self-financing unit, need not present costings from the Faculty Accountant (see paper APAG/18/2c). Mrs Thompson considered that a financial statement should be provided.

COURSE PLANNING

FACULTY OF COMPUTING, ENGINEERING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (APAG/18/5)

18.11 Proposed MSc Internet of Things (FT/PT) (JN) (APAG/18/5a)

The Advisory Group received a proposal and business case to offer a new programme from September 2018.

Professor Murphy reported that Professor Bartholomew had taken Chair's Action to approve the proposal to proceed to planning and evaluation, following sign-off of the course costings by the Executive Dean of the Faculty.

It was noted that:

- Chair's action had been requested by the Faculty in order to meet a perceived deadline for the online prospectus. This deadline had since been clarified as relating only to the hard copy prospectus;
- an initial intake of 15 students rising to 30 was planned.

AGREED that:

- (i) it be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal proceed to planning and evaluation for a September 2018 start;
- (ii) the proposed distribution between full-time and part-time student numbers be identified and the Faculty's nominations for the evaluation panel be provided to the Academic Office;
- (iii) that the annual deadline for the hard copy prospectus be clarified and that this date be taken into consideration in the setting of the date of the January meeting of the Advisory Group.

18.12 FdSc Computing Infrastructure at Belfast Metropolitan College (Castlereagh campus)
(APAG/18/5b)

The Group received a course revision proposal to change the mode of delivery of the FdSc Computing Infrastructure at the Castlereagh campus of Belfast Metropolitan College from September 2018. It noted that the proposal aligned with the University's recently adopted Principles for Foundation Degrees, which expected all courses in a two-year, three-semester part-time mode also to have a standard three-year, two-semester part-time mode. There was evidence that students performed better on three-year programmes.

AGREED: that it be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal be approved.

18.13 Programme Withdrawals

It was noted that the following programmes had been withdrawn:

Last Intake 2013/14

FdEng Engineering (Industrial Electronic Engineering) (Motorsport Technology) (FT, PT, Two Year Three Semester PT) at South West College (Omagh Campus).

Last intake 2015/16

PgD/MSc Computational Intelligence (ME).

Last intake 2017/18

BEng Hons Computer Games Development (ME).

FACULTY OF LIFE AND HEALTH SCIENCES (APAG/18/1)

18.14 Proposed MSc Strength and Conditioning (FT/PT) (JN) (APAG/18/1a)

The Advisory Group received a proposal and business case to offer a new programme from September 2018.

The Chair reported that, following consultation with members, he had taken Chair's Action to endorse the proposal proceeding to planning and evaluation, subject to the course costings being signed off by the Executive Dean of the Faculty.

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

18.15 MSc Applied Psychology (Mental Health and Psychological Therapies)
PgCert Family Therapy and Systemic Practice
Stand-alone Short Course Module PSY801

The Advisory Group noted that a course revision proposal had been received to relocate the programmes and associated modules from Magee to the Coleraine

campus from September 2018, in accordance with the 2015 decision of the Business Review Group, Senate approval and the subsequent one-year postponement to allow a 2016 intake.

ULSTER UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL (APAG/18/2)

18.16 Proposed MSc [Company Name] Global Capital Markets (with PgCert and PgDip exit awards) (PT) (JN/in company) (APAG/18/2a)

The Group received a course proposal and business case to offer an MSc in Global Capital Markets from September 2018. It noted that:

- the Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics had worked with employers to develop the proposal to respond to the skill requirements for the expanding global financial and associated professional services market and to help retain employees;
- a target cohort of 65 was planned;
- there was significant interest from two major companies, and the first intake(s) would be limited to their staff; (the need to be in relevant employment would be set as an entry requirement since the proposed work-based learning module and other curricula would build on students' existing work experience in their company);
- the outline proposal suggested that the name of the company sponsoring employees on the course should appear in the award title and on student award parchments. While recognising the attractiveness of this for the company concerned, the Advisory Group did not support it in principle as the academic award belonged to the University, the programme's learning outcomes would not be company-specific, and the naming of the company could restrict future career mobility of students, with whom the University's primary responsibility would lie. It was expected that teaching, assessment and learning tasks would relate to the specific circumstances of the company in which students were employed and that students might be taught in separate cohorts;
- the course structure proposed 15 credit point modules rather than the new minimum norm of 20 credit points;
- the MSc award was considered by the Faculty to be appropriate. It was suggested that 'Working in ...' be added to the course title;
- the Faculty identified need for a 0.5 FTE relationship manager role and a 0.5 FTE Learning Technologist role (two-year fixed term);
- the business case projected a Cash Implications surplus but a deficit on Financial Projections;
- a Digital Learning Resource Agreement had been completed;
- as a closed rather than open-recruitment programme, a late evaluation event would be feasible.

AGREED that:

- (i) it be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal be approved to proceed to planning and evaluation for a September 2018 start, subject to approval of the course costings by the Executive Dean;

- (ii) the name of the employer company should not be included in the title of the programme;
- (iii) the Faculty liaise with the Director of ADDL regarding possible scope for the collaboration on the Learning Technologist post, and appropriate contingency support.

18.17 Proposed MSc Entrepreneurial Competitiveness (PT) (BT) (APAG/18/2b)

The Group received a course proposal and business case to offer an MSc Entrepreneurial Competitiveness from September 2018. It noted that:

- the Department of Management, Leadership and Marketing had identified a need though the UUBS Advisory Forum, as well as from practising business executives and growth-orientated new business venturers; the programme aimed to support senior executives and key decision-makers as effective entrepreneurial leaders in an increasingly competitive environment;
- there was no equivalent programme available in Ireland and an intake of 15 – 20 was envisaged;
- it would draw on strategic collaborative relationships already established with key international partners including Babson College and Harvard Business School;
- a premium fee would be charged; the distribution between years relating to the credit value of modules taken in each year;
- the Financial Projections showed a deficit but a surplus for Cash Implications;
- no additional resource requirements had been identified;
- Mrs Peden considered that there was generally a need for much closer liaison between Faculties and subject librarians at an early stage in course development in order to identify accurately additional library resources requirements and to ensure that the investment was actually needed. She mentioned resources which had been acquired in the past but never borrowed (this consultation would support greater accuracy in course costing).

AGREED that:

- (i) it be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal be approved to proceed to planning and evaluation for a September 2018 start, subject to approval of the course costings by the Executive Dean;
- (ii) the 'Resource Implications' section of the CA1 Form (section 18) be revised to require confirmation from the Faculty that relevant central departments e.g. Library had been consulted;
- (iii) the flow chart for the planning and approval process be 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 project a deficit.

18.18 Advanced Diploma in Management Practice (APAG/18/2c)

The Group received a course revision proposal to offer the Advanced Diploma in Management Practice at a new outcentre, the Marino Institute of Education, Dublin from February 2018. It noted that:

- the course was currently offered at the Jordanstown campus and at two outcentres: CME Group and Irish Times Training (ITT), Dublin;
- participants would be veterinary practitioners and practice managers from across Ireland and the programme would be tailored to meet the needs of the veterinary sector SMEs with a proposed intake of 15 – 25 participants per cohort;
- the Business Institute proposed a different location in Dublin as the programme would not be promoted by ITT, and it had provided an assessment of the resources available to support delivery.

AGREED: that it be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the new outcentre proposal be approved.

18.19 Programme Withdrawals

It was noted that the following programmes had been withdrawn:

Last intake 2015/16

Advanced Certificate in Civic Leadership and Community Planning (Cavan Innovation and Technology Centre).
Advanced Diploma in Civic Leadership and Community Planning (JN/ME).

ACCESS, DIGITAL AND DISTRIBUTED LEARNING (APAG/18/3)

18.20 Proposed MEd Higher Education Practice (with Postgraduate Diploma Exit Award) (PT) (JN) (APAG/18/3a)

The Advisory Group received a course proposal to offer an MEd Higher Education Practice from January 2019. It noted that:

- the proposed programme was designed for Ulster staff only and would build on the existing Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice which was mandatory for new academic staff;
- it would be aligned to the Strategic Plan and the Learning and Teaching Strategy and would promote professional dialogue about learning and teaching in order to inform, develop and enhance practice to achieve academic excellence; it also aimed to build individual preparedness and institutional preparedness for the forthcoming subject-based Teaching Excellence Framework;
- there had been significant demand (40 participants) for a stand-alone delivery of the 'Shaping the Curriculum' module, running in semester 2, 2017/18, as a taster module in the MEd;
- an annual intake of 25 was planned. Successful completion of the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice was an entry requirement; students

would be exempted from the first 60 credit points since these modules would fulfil the learning outcomes of the Postgraduate Certificate;

- the expected duration should be two years in the first instance with the framework being flexible in adapting to the range of circumstances of staff;
- all modules on the MEd (not including the Postgraduate Certificate component) were free-standing to optimise choice and uptake by staff. Careful consideration would be given to their availability in each semester, taking account of demand and central staff resources. It was suggested that the diagram illustrating the structure of module delivery and availability be re-presented to reflect the team's intentions in this regard;
- as the MEd was not a mandatory programme, it would be essential to mitigate potential conflict of interest for a Head of School in releasing staff for strategic academic development versus academic commitments for a School. It might consequently be appropriate, in view of the strategic priority of the programme, for the University and Faculties to identify the staff whom they would target to support for the course rather than expecting individuals to negotiate release;
- the standard business case was not required because of the internal CPD nature of the course.

AGREED that:

- (i) it be recommended to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the proposal proceed to planning and evaluation for a January 2019 start;
- (ii) consideration be given to a typical duration of two calendar years;
- (iii) the course structure diagram be reviewed to make more explicit the sequencing and availability of the optional modules and to clarify the intention that all modules would be offered at least once every two years;
- (iv) the Learning and Teaching Committee be asked to consider participation principles and a process for identifying staff to undertake the programme.

18.21 COURSE COSTING TEMPLATE (APAG/18/6)

Ms Lucia O'Connor, Deputy Director of Finance, and Mrs Thompson presented a draft revised course costing template which would accompany future course proposals received by the Advisory Group.

It was noted that the revised template:

- aimed to support the work of the Advisory Group and Faculties in understanding the financial implications of new course proposals, and ensure that Faculties had completed appropriate due diligence in this regard; it would be considered as part of the Finance workshop in February;
- the Finance Department recognised that there might be non-monetary, strategic reasons for Faculties or the University to support proposals which projected a deficit;
- the University had moved generally to a Contribution model in Faculty budgeting with approximately 43% Central Contribution for overheads. The new course

costing template would reflect this. It would take into account income (implied Block Grant, Tuition Fee), direct costs (staff, non-payroll) and the Contribution (Table 1); Cumulative surplus or deficit would be projected on this basis taking into account TRAC costs for project enrolment. This differed from the previous 'Cash Implications' model;

- a summary of the Full Economic Costs (including TRAC rates) would continue to be provided (Table 3), but not the full details;
- the responsibility for financial due diligence lay with the Executive Dean; it was suggested that the form should provide for a statement from the Faculty where a deficit was predicted and sign-off by the Executive Dean with a rationale for APAG to note;
- the planned enrolment for the course would be detailed (Table 2) and Faculties should ensure that these numbers were included in their academic plan and the actual recruitment against the plan monitored on an ongoing basis. Dr Keenan confirmed that Faculties were closely monitoring the recruitment performance of courses. Mrs Peden noted that this work was critical to the Library's effectiveness as courses which failed to recruit or significantly under-recruited wasted limited resources;
- Professor Bartholomew intended to continue discussion of the University-wide integration of academic planning matters with Professor Adair to ensure that Faculties were reviewing the assumptions made in their initial proposal against the subsequent achievement of targets;
- the Advisory Group would receive an annual paper (prepared by the Academic Office) at its next meeting comparing projected and actual enrolments for new courses which were validated in the 2016/17 academic year; this would provide some assistance in judging the accuracy of Faculty projections as made on CA1 forms.

AGREED: that the proposed Course Costing template be welcomed and trialled, subject to amendment to include provision for Faculty sign-off by the Associate Dean (Education), and also if necessary by the Executive Dean with a statement in relation to any deficit.

Duration: 2 hours

5 February 2018

AGF/CA/lh