

ULSTER UNIVERSITY
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FORUM
1 February 2017

Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2017 at Jordanstown Campus.

Present: Professor P Bartholomew, Mr L Curran, Mrs C Davison,
Dr M Keenan, Mrs L Lavery, Mrs S McCall, Mr D McDowell,
Mrs D McElwee, Mr J Marley, Mrs T Millar, Mrs H Miller,
Mrs M Paris (Chair), Mr P Quinn, Ms C Reid, Mrs M Sowney.

Apologies: Mrs J Alleyne.

In Attendance: Mrs C Brown, Mr H Deighan, Mr K Kilpatrick (min 17.16),
Mr G McFall (min 17.18), Mrs C McIntyre.

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Professor Bartholomew to his first meeting of the Collaborative Partnerships Forum (CPF).

MINUTES

17.01 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2016 were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

17.02 Library Services (Min 16.45)

Subject Partnership Managers (SPMs) confirmed they had liaised with their Faculty Sub-Librarian to advise Course Directors of databases relevant to their subject areas.

17.03 Review of Plagiarism Policies (Min 16.53)

Following on from the review of College Plagiarism Policies SPMs confirmed that they now align with Ulster University's Plagiarism Policy.

17.04 Progression from Access Courses (Min 16.54)

SPMs and HE Co-ordinators had provided detailed information on progression from Access courses which would be considered later in the meeting.

BMC to provide the contact details of a member of staff in DfE who may be in a position to provide information on the final destinations pilot.

17.05 Retention and Progression Data (Min 16.60)

Following on from the meeting on retention and progression on 17 November 2016 where all Colleges were represented, the Quality Management and Audit Unit (QMAU) provided HE Co-ordinators with progression data for all programmes within their College.

HE Co-ordinators provided oral feedback on action being taken to address retention issues. These include study skills workshops, attendance monitoring, module level investigations, review of induction, mind-set training and the use of a retention tool kit.

Members were informed of an HEA *What Works* tool which provides valuable information on retention.

17.06 University Entry Requirements (Min 16.63)

HE Co-ordinators have now been provided with general and Faculty-specific University entry requirements.

Regarding the matter raised by SERC concerning students enrolled on a Foundation degree who exited the College with a CertHE and enrolled onto a Hons degree programme, the Chair informed that 3 students left SERC at the end of year 1 with a CertHE and commenced a course at Ulster University. This is unusual as the University does not normally make such offers: the CertHE is not specified in the standard offer library, as it is an exit award.

Agreed: that SPMs liaise with their Head of Faculty Administration to ensure that no conditional offers are made on the basis of a CertHE.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

17.07 Next Meeting of the CPF

The next meeting of the CPF will be held on 3rd May 2017 at 10.15 a.m. in room MI022 Magee Campus.

17.08 Feedback from the 2016 Annual Conference

The Chair informed that the feedback from the annual conference had been on the whole very positive with something on the programme for everyone. Some delegates made suggestions for items to be included this year and HE Co-ordinators were asked to forward details of areas of good practice from within their own institution which they would wish to share.

17.09 Low Recruitment on Validated Programmes

The Chair informed that at the Learning and Teaching Committee on 19 October 2016 concern was expressed that there continues to be low recruitment to some programmes with intake suspended to several Foundation degrees in September 2016. As well as the significant costs to the University associated with managing

collaborative activity, there were also implications for the quality of the student experience.

17.10 Recognised Teachers

At the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting on 19th October 2016 concern was expressed at the lateness in the nomination of recognised teachers. It is essential that nominations are forwarded as quickly as possible from the Faculty so that they can be approved by Committee on a timely basis prior to the nominee commencing duties.

17.11 Syllabus Requests

The Academic Office has asked that HE Co-ordinators be reminded that Colleges are responsible for providing former students with course information. Currently Colleges are referring such requests to the Academic Office. This results in students getting passed back and forth which we want to try and avoid.

ONLINE ADMISSIONS AND ENROLMENTS

17.12 Members considered paper CPF/17/01 an update on the review of the online admissions pilot.

The review concluded that online application would be extended to all new students registering on courses running at NWRC in 2017. The pilot of the two current programmes at NRC and BMC will continue for returning students.

Students will apply online, ideally on one day, and B numbers will be generated by the University the following day, along with printed application forms which are returned to the College. The College returns the completed forms with payment to Finance by 6 October. Finance carries out a manual count, and forwards forms to the Collaborative Courses Unit (CCU). The hard copy application forms will have GCSE evidence attached and will be stored by the CCU for sampling by SPMs as is required from 2017.

Finance charges a late enrolment fee of £35 per student. This would be more easily monitored with the online application process. All applications received after this date will incur the fee.

A business case is currently being put together for the online enrolments stage of the admissions process. Online enrolment is particularly challenging where there are optional modules.

It is anticipated that Student ID cards will be produced earlier as a result of the implementation of online applications, however, they will be issued by December at the very latest. As there is a delay between enrolment and production of ID cards, students will be able access a self-service form to generate a letter of confirmation that they are Associate Students of Ulster University, and entitled to access to the library and sports clubs.

PROGRESSION TO ULSTER UNIVERSITY 2016/17

- 17.13 Members received an information paper CPF/17/02 on progression to Ulster University in 2016/17.

In 2016/17 600 students progressed to Ulster University, up from 527 in 2015/16. Over half of these students enrolled on programmes in the Faculty of Computing and Engineering (30%) and the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences (27%). Over half of the progressing students came to the Jordanstown Campus.

Members noted the most popular Hons degree programmes onto which students progressed.

ANALYSIS OF ACCESS PROGRAMMES BY FACULTY

- 17.14 Members considered paper CPF/17/03 on analysis of Access applications by Faculty. An analysis of progression in 2015/16 which focused on 2014/15 data showed that of 1286 registered students only 97 progressed to Ulster University.

Successful Access students are most interested in progressing onto Social Work, Nursing and other Health-related courses. Applicants tend to apply for a number of courses, sometimes as many as 4.

All Faculties reported that there were no impediments to Access students applying to Ulster University in 2015/16.

ANALYSIS OF ACCESS APPLICATIONS BY COLLEGE

- 17.15 Members considered paper CPF/17/04 an analysis of the progression of Access students by College.

It was noted that accurate information on the progression of Access students is difficult to come by as normally no final destination/leavers survey is undertaken. It was also noted that a significant number of students progress to other universities in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain. Many successful Access students continue with their studies in the College.

Members agreed that Access programmes present an opportunity for students to enter into higher education and it is rewarding for all concerned when a student progresses regardless of where that progression is to. Both papers considered together enabled the Forum members to have a fuller picture of progression from Access programmes, and it was agreed that Access provision did lead to higher education study for many more students than had been originally identified.

COLLEGE-WIDE MIS PROCUREMENT

- 17.16 Mr Kilpatrick from SRC provided members with an update on the procurement of a College-wide MIS system. A ministerial decision on the future of the project is due at the end of this month although that may now be delayed due to current political uncertainty. However, indications from DfE are that the business case will be

approved. If approved, implementation could start in September 2018, with the new Learner Management System (LMS) as a priority in the first phase of the implementation. Early indications are that there should not be a problem introducing additional fields to accommodate higher education data requirements.

A short-term interim solution to accommodate HE requirements could be in place by September 2017, but may present challenges as Colleges have different academic structures and IT structures in place.

Mr Kilpatrick agreed to keep members updated on the MIS procurement process.

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES FROM THE 2015/16 ANNUAL COURSE REVIEW

17.17 Members considered paper CPF/17/05 on the outcomes from the 2015/16 annual course review.

The Sub-Group reviewing the submissions considered the action taken to address the issues raised last year. They were satisfied that matters forwarded to Faculties and the CPF had been addressed, although they asked that further staff development be provided on the embedding of study skills to include referencing skills. Members cited examples of good referencing practice both within the University and Colleges and agreed this could be taken forward through a staff development workshop.

With regard to the issues referred to partner institutions, they were, on the whole, satisfied that these had been addressed. They were pleased to note that the Head of the Institution now signs off the ACR submission signifying senior management engagement in the process.

The Sub-Group were generally content with the quality of the submissions and the supporting documentation received. However, they were disappointed that for quite a number of programmes the University was still not receiving proof that the actual response from the Course Team to the External Examiner and the SPM report had been sent. The University had no evidence to show that the response had actually been provided.

With regard to assessment and moderation, External Examiners confirmed that the methods of assessment were appropriate, and the marking and classifications allowed for appropriate discrimination between candidates. A broad range of assessments were used, and a number of External Examiners commended the increase in the teamwork approach to delivery and assessment. They also commended the increase in online assessment submissions and feedback to students.

The Sub-Group were concerned that on a number of fast-track part-time Foundation degrees, course teams had not provided a response to the External Examiner report with their submission. They acknowledged that for this mode of delivery course teams would not have received the External Examiner report for 2015/16. The Sub-Group asked that HE Co-ordinators be reminded that the course team should use the previous year's report for annual course review purposes. However, at the follow-up meeting of the Sub-Group last week the QMAU and the Forum have been asked to consider how best to action matters raised by the External Examiner on fast-track Foundation degrees.

Another matter relating to fast-track part-time Foundation degrees which concerned the Sub-Group was the high number of early leavers and fails. There was also concern that on some programmes students were in class from 9.00 a.m. until 9.00 p.m. on day release. They felt that a long day such as this did not lend itself to effective or deep student learning.

The Sub-Group were of the view that Colleges could better screen applications to ensure that only suitable students were enrolled onto the fast-track programme. The Sub-Group asked that retention and progression for fast-track programmes continue to be monitored through the CPF.

The Sub-Group were concerned that some students were being registered on a course by APEL, but SPMs were not informed of this, nor was it disclosed on the SER. Course Teams must provide details in the SER of how they select students who do not meet the course entry requirements. They must also consult SPMs where candidates are under consideration for APEL. They asked that an audit of adherence to the regional APEL policy be undertaken by SPMs.

The Sub-Group noted with concern that on a number of courses student names and personal details were still being minuted.

The Sub-Group were concerned that on a number of programmes across Colleges, student enrolments exceeded the number approved at evaluation/revalidation. This is an issue in terms of loss of income to the University and also raises concerns as to the adequacy of resources to support student learning. This matter is being considered as part of a review of collaborative activity currently being undertaken by the University.

The Head of Library Services confirmed that there were no major issues with library provision in partner institutions.

With regard to the approval of published information the Sub-Group recommended that HE Co-ordinators be reminded that even where there are no significant changes to a prospectus entry for a number of years, published information should still be forwarded to the SPM prior to each instance of publication.

The following matters were referred to the CPF for action:

	Recommendation	Agreed Action
1.	That the actual formal written response to the External Examiner and Subject Partnership Manager reports be provided with the annual course review submissions.	That in future the covering letter or email to the External Examiner and SPM be provided with the Course Team response to the reports.
2.	That where the programme is delivered in fast-track part-time mode the External Examiner report from the previous year be used for annual course review purposes.	The SPM will provide an interim report on issues raised by the External Examiner after the June Progress Board meeting which will be used for annual

		course review purpose. The Course Team should also respond to the previous year's External Examiner report.
3.	That further consideration be given to the poor retention and high level of fails on fast-track part-time Foundation degrees.	Principles which must be adhered to when developing fast-track Foundation degrees will be developed by SPMs with reference to HE Co-ordinators
4.	That even when there are no significant changes to a prospectus entry year on year, all draft published information should be approved by the Subject Partnership Manager prior to publication.	Drafts must be forwarded to the SPM by the named contact in the College on annual basis: Approval is for 1 year only.
5.	That an audit be undertaken of the arrangements in place to ensure that the Regional policy on APEL is being adhered to.	Colleges will be asked to provide their APEL policy and supporting documentation. A sample audit will then be undertaken to ensure compliance with agreed procedures.

The Chair informed that at the follow up meeting of the Sub-Group it was agreed that:

- i) where the same course is offered on a number of campuses a single Self-Evaluation Report (SER), with supporting documentation, should be provided. Cohort data could be provided separately in the statistical analysis section of the report.
- ii) Clarity be provided on the timing of feedback to students. The Chair reminded members that all assignments must be returned within 15 working days of submission but it is considered good practice for work to be returned sooner if possible.

AFFILIATE STAFF

17.18 Members considered paper CPF/17/06 on the new arrangements for access to the University Library for College staff.

Members were informed that the access accorded to Affiliate Staff will change from 1 March 2017, specifically for those members of FE College staff who teach Associate Students. This change will not apply to those members of staff teaching Ulster University students in outcentres or on franchised courses, with the status of Recognised Teachers.

This move is in order to rectify an anomaly which was not anticipated at the time of the creation of Affiliate Staff accounts. The original intention was that the level of

access for Affiliate Staff would reflect the level of access of the students they taught. However, the University systems are configured in such a way that we could not offer less than full RAD access, which posed a security risk. It is hoped that this change will not affect many users, especially in the light of user activity for 2015/16, where out of 133 live accounts, only 4 individuals accessed the resources, accounting for 3% of all potential users.

Where a member of staff in an FE College is teaching Associate Students on a validated course, access will change, and current access rights will cease on 28 February 2017. FE College staff may then apply for library membership directly without having to go through the College HE Co-ordinator.

Once the application is approved by the SPM the Library will authorise the creation of a borrower record and the production of a library card. This will be posted directly to the new borrower along with information about access and renewal.

The term of membership is 12 months from approval. Renewal is upon request, and renewal contact details will be provided with the card. The borrower will have library access, as well as entitlement to 4 standard loans, and inter-campus loans.

MARKETING WORKING GROUP

- 17.19 Members received a paper CPF/17/07 an update on joint marketing activity between the University and partner institutions.

Mr Quinn informed members that the landing page (ulster.ac.uk/associatestudents) has been updated with additional wider content of two progressing students from BMC now available through *youtube*.

Over 400 students from FE Colleges attended Open Days at the University. Students will be invited to a range of applicant information events during the year.

The annual Career Teachers' Conference will be held on Saturday 11 March 2017, and invitations will be sent to relevant staff in College.

The Chair informed that the Faculty of Computing and Engineering has arranged a number of subject specific open day/evening events. The Computing events have been oversubscribed but there has been less demand for places at the Engineering event. HE Co-ordinators were encouraged to get students to attend such events.

MATTERS ARISING FROM INFORMATION PAPERS

- 17.20 Members received paper CPF/17/08 information papers from SPMs and HE Co-ordinators on matters relating to collaborative activity.

As there was no further action these papers were taken as read.

Duration: 2 hours

ACTION SHEET

	MINUTE	ACTION	ACTION BY	DEADLINE
1	17.06	SPMs liaise with their Head of Faculty Administration to ensure that no conditional offers are made on the basis of a CertHE.	SPMs	31/3/17
2	17.17	i) Clarity be provided on the timing of feedback to students. The Chair reminded members that all assignments must be returned within 15 working days of submission but it is considered good practice for work to be returned sooner if possible.	SPMs	31/3/17
		ii) HE Co-ordinators provide a copy of their APEL policy and supporting documentation.	HE Co-ordinators	10/3/17
		iii) SPMs undertake a sample audit of College APEL Policy.	SPMs	31/3/17