

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/21/2g)

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

11 March 2021

Agenda Item 5.4.4

COVER SHEET

EXTENSION OF APPROVAL

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Unit 18A: Law (UG)

*Presenter: Professor R Fee*

To consider a proposal for a one-year extension to the period of approval for the programmes within Unit 18A.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

**UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER**

**REQUEST TO EXTEND APPROVAL AND POSTPONE REVALIDATION**

**Form CA6b)**

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**SECTION A: FACULTY REQUEST**

FACULTY: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

SCHOOL: School of Law

REVALIDATION UNIT NUMBER AND NAME: 18A – LAW (UG)

MONTH/YEAR CURRENTLY SCHEDULED: February 2022

PERIOD OF EXTENSION REQUESTED: One year (this can be negotiated/reviewed in light of any backlog faced by Academic Office)

(eg one year to include the September 2018 intake)

COURSE(S): The whole unit.  
(Identify specific courses unless the whole unit)

**REASON FOR REQUEST:**

The Covid-19 pandemic has placed nearly unbearable strain upon academic staff, administrative staff and beyond within the School of Law. The strain does not only come with increased administration within work as can be seen with mitigating measures that have been brought into place as well as providing the best possible teaching remotely. One must also be cognisant of the effect that the Government restrictions place upon individuals in their day-to-day life. This is clear with many staff having to adapt to home schooling and other aspects that were unforeseen as a result of the pandemic.

The purpose of the revalidation exercise should be to review the course and receive comments which will allow for improvement of the course for staff and students alike. At the present time it is unlikely that the revalidation process could be fully facilitated considering the strain that has been placed upon senior staff within the School of Law.

With the roll out of the vaccine programme, it is hoped and envisaged that there will be a return to normality over the course of the next year. This will, in turn, provide staff with the opportunity to focus on certain aspects of work which will include revalidation. Within the School of Law, we strive for excellence by continuing to develop our programmes to make them as current as possible and ensuring high quality teaching. Trying to deliver high quality teaching for our students has come at a price during the pandemic with increased workloads and administrative burden. This has limited the scope that staff have for other activities, one of which is revalidation. To ensure that the aims of revalidation are fully achieved, it is submitted that extending approval and postponing revalidation would be beneficial.

**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)

I can confirm that the undergraduate programmes run within the School of Law are current and valid. This is evidenced by the most recent external examiner reports. The four external examiners stated the following:

External Examiner Mairead Enright commented - The course is of a good standard. I tend to correspond with module leaders throughout the year and offer advice/feedback as issues arise. This year I had the opportunity to comment on changes to the Public International Law course, and was pleased to see that colleagues had reflected carefully on issues of representation and perspective in the curriculum, even though the foundations of the course appeared traditional at first glance.

External Examiner Dr Pavel Repyeuski commented - Structure of the law courses is appropriate to the respective levels. The course specifications and are aligned with the QAA standards and with the QLD. Research and scholarship of the very dedicated teaching staff is informing teaching and learning on the law courses and its pedagogy.

External Examiner Agata Fijalkowski commented - I found the courses and the component modules coherent and appropriate to the level of qualification and subject area. Where appropriate, reference is made to the regulatory body's requirements, whether in the course handbook or at the external board of examiners' meetings.

External Examiner Professor Adam Geary commented - The structure and content of the courses I examine were coherent and authentic to the level of assessment as understood across the sector and informed by the relevant benchmarks and standards.

This demonstrates that the undergraduate law provision at Ulster University is appropriate when compared alongside other law programmes in the United Kingdom. There is also reference to the QAA standards by the external examiners as well as other regulatory body recommendations.

There were no concerns noted by the External Examiners in relation to the undergraduate courses.

#### 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 external examiner reports from the most recent academic year (19/20) outlined that the standard of the course is high and there are no concerns with how it is run. This can be evidenced by the following comments made in relation to the student learning experience within the undergraduate law courses:

External Examiner Dr Pavel Repyeuski commented - Module teams are using wide range of assessment methods to facilitate student learning and students achieving learning outcomes. In particular, it was good to see diverse assessment, such as student presentations (where law students would master the crucial presenting skills), as well as some multiple choice assessments, which would go in line with the recent changes for the SQE (SRA schemes).

External Examiner Agata Fijalkowski commented - I found the range of methods and outcomes provides evidence of effective student learning. These satisfy national subject benchmarks. The range exposes students to a variety of assessments, not only facilitating learning, but also resulting in transferrable skills to apply in the profession. Across modules I saw engagement between the course and module convenor and student, evidence of good practice on the part of the academic staff in the student learning process.

There were no concerns raised by the external examiners in relation to the standards of the course with all noting that it is comparable to other courses run within the United Kingdom.

The Undergraduate Law provision has previously been in supportive measures but having come through that process the standard and quality of the provision has improved greatly. This is continued with a robust system of student feedback that is acted upon in a timely manner. This position is exemplified by the fact that in the last run of the Continuous Assurance for Quality Enhancement the

LLB Law at both Magee and Jordanstown was commended for the strong metrics and improvements in relation to retention, overall progression, completion and NSS Outcomes.

The UG Law programmes at both Jordanstown and Magee have provided good NSS outcomes over the last two years. In 2019, the UG Law course received a very impressive 100% for student satisfaction. In the most recent NSS survey results, the LLB Law FT course at Jordanstown received 88% for student satisfaction and was above the average in the majority of the key indicators in the NSS Survey.

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)

N/A

DEMAND:

There is a high level of demand for the undergraduate law provision and the Accounting and Law programme. This is evidenced through the continued high number of applicants for the courses. Please see the table appended as demonstrable evidence of how the number of applicants and students has increased over the last five years.

There was clearly an evidenced demand by virtue of the School of Law accepting more students in this academic year (20/21) despite the effect that the pandemic has had. Additionally, the School of Law at Jordanstown went beyond its MASN numbers in facilitating the applicants.

In first year the number have increased with an intake of 180. Of these students, 36 were BSc Accounting with Law students. This is an increase in relation to previous intakes and demonstrates the demand for the courses that are to run in this revalidation event. Furthermore, the School of Law has been able to retain relatively high grade requirements for the courses and still be in demand.

In first year there were 66 students for Law at Magee.

The applicants for the forthcoming 21/22 academic year (as of 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021) are as follows:

Jordanstown/Belfast:

LLB Law FT – 426  
LLB Law with Politics & Int'l Studies – 134  
LLB Law with Criminology – 305

Magee:

LLB Law – 130  
LLB Law with Accounting – 18  
LLB Law with Marketing – 24  
LLB Law with Irish – 16

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

**FACULTY CONFIRMATION:**

SIGNED:  \_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Dean (Education)

DATE: \_\_\_29 Jan 2021\_\_\_\_\_

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

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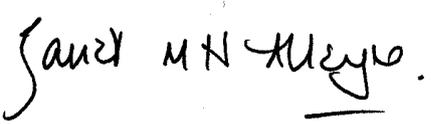
**SECTION B: ACADEMIC OFFICE COMMENTS:**

The revalidation unit comprises undergraduate Law in single honours and as a subject at the Jordanstown/Belfast and Magee campuses. The revalidation event was scheduled for 2021/22 and the request is for an extension to approval until 2022/23 (one year) on the basis of the impact of the pandemic on revalidation preparation and staff wellbeing. The reports from three external examiners were very supportive and complimentary in terms of the quality and standards of the provision and about the quality of feedback to students in particular.

SIGNED:  DATE: \_\_\_\_ 1.3.21 \_\_\_\_  
Academic Policy and Standards Manager

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

  
4 March 2021  
SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Head of Quality Enhancement

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**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: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair ASQEC

DATE REPORTED TO ASQEC:

Academic Office  
July 2019

COURSE	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	FT	PT					FT	PT	FT	PT
<b>JORDANSTOWN</b>										
LLB (Hons) Law FT and PT	95	39	99	41	116	54	141	50	177	50
LLB (Hons) Law with Crim FT and PT	63	8	66	13	65	13	69	14	78	13
LLB (Hons) Law with Pol FT and PT	23	8	24	13	19	13	24	14	20	13
BSc Acct & Law (FT and PT)	21	0	21	0	25	0	43	0	43	0
LLM HR & TJ (FT and PT)	11	7	6	3	12	9	7	11	15	8
LLM GC & HR (FT and PT)	5	6	6	8	9	9	3	7	11	7
<b>BELFAST</b>										
LLM CLE (now LLM A2J) FT & PT	9	1	6	2	9	2	7	4	10	3
PG Cert in Emp Law FT & PT					16	3	17	7	15	7
LLM in Emp Law FT & PT									3	4
LLM Int Commercial Law FT & PT							11	4	16	4
<b>MAGEE</b>										
LLB (Hons) Law FT and PT	83	20	85	21	89	25	114	17	133	17
LLB (Hons) Law with Accountancy FT & PT	7	3	5	3	7	3	12	3	14	3
LLB (Hons) Law with Irish FT & PT	2	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	6	0
LLB (Hons) Law with Marketing FT & PT	4	0	3	1	5	2	11	2	11	1
LLB (Hons) Law with HRM FT & PT	12	3	11	3	9	3	3	2	3	2
LLB (Hons) Law with Sociology FT	6									
LLM Commercial Law FT & PT	6	7	8	9	7	4	1	0		
<b>SUB-TOTALS</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>449</b>		<b>457</b>		<b>529</b>		<b>602</b>		<b>687</b>	