

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/21/3a)

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

11 March 2021

Agenda Item 6.1.1

COVER SHEET

DEPARTURES AND VARIATIONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S REGULATORY
FRAMEWORK:

Unit 26Ki: Criminology, Politics and Social Policy

BSc (Hons) Policing and Criminology (Applied Practice)

Presenter: Professor R Fee

Action is required of the Committee:

Consideration of approval for departure from the requirement for a compulsory final year dissertation/project in an honours degree.

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ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

**Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences**

BSc (Hons) Policing and Criminology (Applied Practice)

The above programme was successfully validated on 20th January 2021, subject to approval of one condition and a few recommendations. One such outcome included in the Academic Office notes that must be met is that:

A paper is required for consideration of approval by ASQEC regarding the absence of a project/dissertation module in the final level of the Honours degree, a departure from the normal University regulation.

This paper provides a background to, and justification for, the request to assess learning outcomes normally found within a dissertation module across two level 6 modules.

Background

Ulster University was successful in tendering for the accreditation and delivery of three separate but linked courses in partnership with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI):

- BSc (Hons) Policing and Criminology (Applied Practice)
(New programme of study for evaluation)
- Graduate Certificate in Policing and Criminology (Applied Practice)
(New programme of study for evaluation that comprises of two work-based learning modules from the above degree programme)
- Advanced Diploma in Policing
(An existing programme of study for revalidation that forms the level 5 basis for the degree programme of study above)

The ethos behind all courses is one of partnership, and extensive work took place over a period of 18 months with a range of stakeholders to design programmes that met the requirements of the organisation; met national benchmarks; enhanced performance in the workplace; and reflected the demands and challenges of 21st Century Policing. In summary:

- The vision behind the degree development is one of a work-based, professional degree, where all modules are linked to provide a holistic programme where theory and practice are fully integrated as part of the award;
- 50% of the programme content of the degree will be delivered by Ulster academics and 50% delivered by Recognised University Teachers at PSNI. However, this will not be an exclusive arrangement as all modules will flow from and inform other modules and the learning across the programme;
- The programme will be designed and delivered using blended learning. However, it is important that the course is not fully online in order to ensure the students get opportunities to learn with peers and with direction, to

critically reflect and to be challenged to think about future directions within policing and their own practice. Ulster University is the leading provider of part-time education in Northern Ireland and will draw upon our expertise in designing and delivering programmes for professionals in full-time work. We will use our campuses in Magee, Coleraine, Belfast and Jordanstown to provide structured seminars and drop-in studies advice sessions for all students. This proposed blended learning environment will minimise abstraction from operational duty and take into account the long working hours and stressful work environment;

- The proposed programme from Ulster is based upon accrediting professional practice, underpinned by world-leading research and designed and delivered by the same experts. Thus, the programme will not only accredit the development of applied police learning and reflective practice, but will develop the application of problem solving, critical thinking and, research and analysis skills;
- The programme will be underpinned by excellent pedagogy and practice, supported by Ulster University Centre for Higher Education and Research Practice, curriculum design experts and via a dedicated centre at Ulster for policing programmes.

The Honours programme was designed with no separate dissertation at level 6 based on the above framework, and in order to create a programme where theory meets practice across all activities. The justification for this approach is set out below.

Justification

As part of the level 6 award, all students will have to complete six assessments across two Ulster-led 30 credit modules – Problem Solving Policing (PUP549), and Victims, Community and Public Confidence Policing (PUP550). Each of the assessments will draw on the experiences and practice of the student and ensure that their time and commitment is focused on learning that will transfer directly to operational policing issues. The students will work to academic frameworks and be encouraged to use reflective practice and critical problem-solving tools to engage on contemporary policing issues faced by probationary officers. The requirements for each assessment will be set by Ulster University and PSNI tutors to ensure they are underpinned by both academic rigour and institutional police knowledge and experience.

All assessments require students to complete independent research and will provide opportunities to enhance and display a range of skills. Both PUP549 and PUP550 have been designed drawing upon the learning outcomes of the BSc (Hons) Criminology and Criminal Justice degree level 6 Dissertation PUP510. Students will have to demonstrate an ability to investigate and report in a coherent and systematic manner on a range of criminological and criminal justice issues. They will have to conduct extensive literature reviews; develop arguments which arise out of the theoretical, policy and/or practical context of the areas under study; analyse data alongside knowledge already published in the area; draw inferences and conclusions based on their findings and produce content for multiple platforms which is conducive to different audiences. All these skills that are based on the outcomes of PUP510 are attained by students undertaking PUP549 and PUP550.

Through the multiple assessments the students will also build upon and gain new employability skills, including analytical skills, attention to detail, computation and data-processing skills, investigative and research skills, communication skills, and organisational skills along with problem solving and reporting skills.

The case proposed by the team has been approved at School and Faculty level.

Dr Jonny Byrne, 28K Unit Co-ordinator

Professor Kris Lasslett, Head of School, Applied Social and Policy Sciences

Professor Ruth Fee, Associate Dean (Education) AHSS

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