

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FORUM

COVER SHEET

*Presenter: Mrs M Paris*

Action is required of the Committee as indicated below.

To consider the report from the meeting of the Forum held on 10 April 2019.

**REPORT FROM THE MEETING OF THE COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FORUM (10 April 2019)****1. APPLICATION OF THE NEW DEGREE ALGORITHM TO FOUNDATION DEGREES**

At the last meeting of the Forum members considered the outcomes of an exercise whereby 193 sets of student marks were modelled using the degree algorithm of 30% level 4 modules, 70% level 5 modules to assess the impact of any changes to the marks. 82 students, or 42% saw their marks go down, while 111 students, or 58%, saw their marks stay the same or go up.

HE Co-ordinators agreed to discuss the proposed algorithm with their colleagues and report back. This was part of a range of measures which might enhance first sit success.

The consensus of opinion among the HE Co-ordinators was based largely on discussions with course directors who noted that for many students the transition from FE to HE was significant and as such it would be unfair for the first year of the Fd to count towards the final award. Some students, particularly adult returners, require a considerable amount of pastoral and academic support during the first year of the programme.

It was also noted that within the FE sector there is more emphasis placed on completion of the programme rather than the HE success measurement.

In CAFRE many of the students on Fd programmes are co-taught with students on Honours degree programmes.

It was accepted that any analysis would be looking at historical data and would not take account of the fact that students might have performed better had they known that level 4 assessments contributed to the final award. It was also accepted that the student voice would have to be taken into consideration before a final decision could be made regarding the degree algorithm.

It was agreed that

- i) after the Supplementary Board Course Directors model the overall cohort performance based on 30% at level 4 and 70% at level 5;
- ii) the Chair provide a template to assist in this calculation;
- iii) HE Co-ordinators discuss the new Fd algorithm with students;
- iv) HE Co-ordinators report to the next meeting of the Forum on the outcomes of the modelling exercise and their discussions with students.

## 2. KEY DATES FOR ARTICULATION ROUTES

Members considered a paper on key dates for articulation routes

The main examination period is Monday 13 May to Saturday 25 May 2019 with the last date for holding Boards of Examiners being Thursday 13 June 2019.

For Year 2 entry for Fds signed and approved Course Results Sheets should be returned to the CCU by Friday 21 June 2019. Applicants who have passed their Fd but have not met the asking grades will be put on a waiting list.

The Supplementary Examination period runs from Wednesday 14 August to Thursday 22 August 2019 with all confirmed marks returned to the CCU by Thursday 29 August 2019 at the latest in order to meet the UCAS deadline for applicants to meet offer conditions in time (31 August 2019). As the examination period includes a Bank Holiday it is a very tight timeframe to hold examinations and get confirmed marks to CCU. Course teams should consider running examinations as early as possible.

The 2Y3S examination period runs from Monday 2 September to Friday 6 September 2019 with meetings of the Boards of Examiners to be held between Monday 16 September to Friday 20 September 2019.

HE Co-ordinators were reminded that the expectation is that these part-time students will progress to part-time articulation routes, and the University will accommodate this. Where an applicant has applied for full-time progression, the duration of their studies breaches the UCAS deadline, so part-time 2Y3S students who have applied for full-time courses will have to wait a year until September 2020 and apply through UCAS by January 2020; alternatively they may take up part-time study following the boards in September 2019.

## 3. ONLINE ADMISSIONS

Members considered a paper on an Online Admissions (OLA) process to be available to all new students on collaborative programmes for the 2019/20 academic year.

The University piloted OLA at BMC and NWRC and now plan to extend the online process in all Colleges for new students for 2019/20 entry. The OLA process will include document upload of entry qualifications.

Students who have been accepted by the College on collaborative programmes will apply via OLA to the appropriate programme and upload documents as appropriate. There will be two categories of document upload to include for all students apart from Access Diploma applicants. Student Administration will create student numbers B00 for those who have applied online and who have provided the appropriate documentary evidence. It is the responsibility of the Colleges to ensure that the documents uploaded comply fully with Ulster requirements. Only those applicants meeting the required criteria will have an enrolment form produced.

Once the OLA process becomes embedded it is the University's intention to adopt Online Enrolments (OLE) for module selection and uploading photographs for the printing and issuing of student ID cards.

Guidance on the OLA process is currently being developed which will be provided to all partner institutions. An online video will also be produced which can be used for staff training.

#### 4. PRINCIPLES FOR ASSURING THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND THE QUALITY OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE ON WITHDRAWN COURSES IN PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Members received a paper on the principles for assuring the academic standards and the quality of the student experience on withdrawn courses in partner institutions.

In light of the increase in the number of courses being withdrawn or suspended in partner institutions the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee agreed that some principles and guidance be developed to:

- Assist Colleges in the management of the course closure process;
- Ensure the consistent, comparable and equitable treatment of students enrolled on these courses;
- Provide assurance to students, employers and other stakeholders that academic standards and the quality of the student experience are maintained until courses have been closed;
- Provide assurance to the University as the awarding body that effective processes are in place for the delivery, management and monitoring of closing courses;
- Reduce the risk of decreased student satisfaction as expressed in NSS outcomes or through internal or external complaints and associated reputational risk.

In essence this guidance makes it clear that changes to the terms and conditions of course offerings must be clearly and unambiguously communicated to students at the (1) research and application stage (2) offer stage and (3) enrolment stages by providing them with the material information they need to make informed choices so that they can opt out or make alternative choices on a timely basis. Students must be advised of their right to cancel and all information must be provided in plain and intelligible language. Where material changes are made to existing provision the express agreement of students must be sought. Material information does not necessarily include all of the information that might potentially be of interest to a student but is the information which the student needs to make an informed choice. An HE provider's terms and conditions and any changes made to them must not be deemed to be unreasonable in terms of fairness to the student.

## 5. ANNUAL COURSE REVIEW

Members were advised that the University is currently reviewing its arrangements for annual course review. The new process, when agreed, will concentrate on data sets such as recruitment, retention and success. There will be no requirement to complete a Self-Evaluation Report.

Further details as the new process, when agreed, will be provided in good time for the 2018/19 review.

H Deighan