

REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP (23.1.2020)

Presenter: Professor B Murphy

COVER SHEET

Action is required of the Committee as indicated below

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Topic</u> | <u>Action</u> |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Course Planning | To approve recommendations. |
| 2 | Asking Grade / Entry Requirement Amendments | To approve recommendations. |
| 3 | Enrolment on New Programmes Validated in 2018/19 | To note. |
| 4 | Resourcing Plans for Programmes Undergoing Revalidation | To note. |
| 5 | Programme Withdrawals | To note. |

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP (23.1.2020)

PRESENT

Professor B Murphy (Chair), Dr S Crothers, Professor M Durkin, Mr A G Faulkner, Ms R McCart, Mrs C McCarthy, Mr S McConomy, Mrs R McEvoy, Mrs J Peden, Mrs E Thompson

1 COURSE PLANNING

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

PgDip/MSc Community Youth Work (PT) (ME)

It was noted that Chair's action had been taken on behalf of the Advisory Group to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee approval of a proposal for a one-off January 2020 intake instead of September 2019. The Advisory Group noted that subsequent annual intakes would be in September, with the next intake in September 2021.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposal be approved. [Approved by ASQEC Chair's action.]

FACULTY OF COMPUTING, ENGINEERING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Proposed MSc Planning Resilient Cities (FT/PT) (JN/DL)

It was noted that Chair's action had been taken on behalf of the Advisory Group to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee approval of a proposal to introduce MSc Planning Resilient Cities in full-time and part-time modes at the Jordanstown campus and by distance learning from September 2020 to proceed to planning and evaluation, subject to a Distance Learning Resource Agreement (DLRA) being completed with the Office for Digital Learning prior to evaluation in January 2020. It noted that:

- a DLRA had now been signed;
- the title of the proposed programme had been revised to MSc Planning and City Resilience.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposal be approved.

Proposed BEng Hons Electronic Engineering with Enterprise Development (FT/PT) (ME)
Proposed BEng Hons Mechanical Engineering with Enterprise Development (FT/PT) (ME)

The Advisory Group considered proposals and Resourcing Plans to introduce BEng Hons Electronic Engineering with Enterprise Development and BEng Hons Mechanical Engineering with Enterprise Development in full-time and part-time modes at the Magee campus from September 2020. It noted that:

- the programmes would be jointly delivered by the School of Computing, Engineering and Intelligent Systems and the Department of Global Business and Enterprise;
- all modules were shared with existing courses in the two schools; no adjustments would be required to the current timetabling of the modules;
- no additional resources were required;
- different entry criteria and less mathematical content meant that the two new courses would not compete with existing undergraduate engineering courses for the same pool of applicants.

Given that the programmes had missed the UCAS deadline for September 2020 entry, the Advisory Group queried where the applicants would come from for 2020 entry. It was advised that each year a number of applicants were turned down for entry to other courses in the School and that these applicants could be offered the new programmes. Mrs McEvoy stated that the programmes could be promoted in Clearing and that schools would be informed of these options. The programmes could also be promoted at events for applicants in February. Mrs McEvoy highlighted the importance of the programmes attracting additional students and not simply spreading existing students over more courses.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposal be approved to proceed to planning and evaluation as part of the revalidation event for Unit 16E in March 2020.

Proposed MSc Artificial Intelligence (PT) at Hong Kong University SPACE
Proposed MSc Internet of Things (PT) at Hong Kong University SPACE

The Advisory Group considered proposals and Resourcing Plans to offer MSc Artificial Intelligence and MSc Internet of Things in part-time mode at Hong Kong University School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE) from September 2020. It noted that:

- the University had a long-standing relationship with HKU SPACE;
- HKU SPACE was hoping to become an autonomous degree-awarding institution, independent of Hong Kong University;
- as HKU SPACE was now an established partner of the University, the Faculty should consider negotiating a higher fee base.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposals be approved to proceed to planning and evaluation.

FdEng Civil Engineering at Belfast Metropolitan College (Millfield)

The Advisory Group considered a proposal to reinstate, for this course only, the two-year, three-semester attendance pattern for part-time HLA students from 2019/20 in a pilot scheme. It noted that:

- the two-year, three-semester part-time mode had not been approved at revalidation in April 2018; subsequently the College had worked with the Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) in 2018 to adapt the Foundation degree in a pilot HLA.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposal be approved, as a pilot.

Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Composites and Polymers (FT/PT)

MSc Advanced Composites and Polymers (FT/PT)

Postgraduate Diploma in Manufacturing Management (FT/PT)

MSc Manufacturing Management (FT/PT)

Postgraduate Diploma in Biomedical Engineering (FT/PT)

MSc Biomedical Engineering (FT/PT)

The Advisory Group considered a proposal to replace in CMS and prospectuses separate Postgraduate Diploma and MSc entries for each programme with linked PgDip/MSc entries. It noted that:

- the Faculty's aim was to simplify marketing by reducing the number of course codes used and there was no change to the content of the programmes;
- faculties could choose, depending on entry criteria, whether they held in CMS separate PgDip and MSc entries, a linked PgDip/MSc entry or an MSc (with PgDip exit award) entry;
- the Faculty intended to review how their postgraduate programmes were maintained in CMS in order to achieve greater consistency.

AGREED:

- (i) that the proposal be approved;
- (ii) that the Faculty seek advice from Planning, Student Administration and Marketing on the potential consequences of changing the programmes to linked PgDip/MSc, including in regard to Banner course codes.

MSc Advanced Composites and Polymers (FT)

MSc Biomedical Engineering (FT)

The Advisory Group considered a proposal to introduce a 240-credit point pathway (Applied Research) in the full-time version of each programme from 2020/21. It noted that:

- the proposal was to introduce a 'specialism' to allow a longer Master's whereby students could choose to take a 120-credit point dissertation module in place of the traditional 60-credit point dissertation;
- such proposals had already been accepted by the Advisory Group for MSc Data Science from September 2019 and for five other degrees in the Faculty from September 2020.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposal be approved.

BSc Hons Computing Science (FT) (JN)

The Advisory Group considered a proposal and Resourcing Plan to add an Integrated Foundation Year (IFY) in the full-time mode of BSc Hons Computing Science at the Jordanstown campus from 2020/21. It noted that:

- this was distinct from the integrated International Foundation Year approved for 21 Honours degrees (including this degree) from September 2019;
- the proposal had arisen from the successful pilot of a bridging module at Jordanstown in 2019 and past experience of an IFY for a short period from 2007;
- an exit award of Diploma in Computing Science would be available for those who successfully completed the IFY but did not continue their studies;

- the IFY would be delivered within the existing resources of the School using current staff and facilities;
- the external examiners had provided statements of support for the concept of the Integrated Foundation Year but had not confirmed the suitability of the individual modules.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposal be approved, subject to confirmation from the external examiner that the modules were appropriate.

BSc Hons Computer Science (FT) (ME)

BEng Hons Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering (FT) (ME)

The Advisory Group considered a proposal and Resourcing Plan to add an Integrated Foundation Year (IFY) in the full-time mode of BSc Hons Computer Science and BEng Hons Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering at the Magee campus from 2020/21. It noted that:

- the proposal had arisen from the successful pilot of a bridging module at Magee from 2017;
- the concept of the IFY year had been approved by SLT in September 2018;
- an exit award of Diploma in Foundation Studies would be available for those who successfully completed the IFY but did not continue their studies;
- the external examiners had confirmed support for the concept of the Integrated Foundation Year; BEng Hons Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering was subject to revalidation in 2019/20 and the proposal would be considered by the panel at that time.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that the proposal to introduce the IFY in BSc Hons Computer Science be approved, subject to confirmation from the external examiner that the modules were appropriate;
- (ii) that the proposal to introduce the IFY in BEng Hons Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering be approved, subject to approval by the revalidation panel for Unit 16E in March 2020.

FACULTY OF LIFE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Proposed BSc Hons Horticulture (FT/PT) at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)

The Advisory Group considered a proposal and Resourcing Plan to introduce BSc Hons Horticulture in full-time and part-time modes at CAFRE from September 2021. It noted that:

- there was currently no progression route available in Northern Ireland for students who completed the University-validated Foundation degree in Horticulture;
- there was a commitment from CAFRE for additional staff.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposal be approved to proceed to planning and evaluation.

ULSTER UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

Proposed MSc Business and Technology (with PgCert Business Analysis and Consulting and PgDip Transformation Management and Leadership exit awards) (PT) (BT/JN)
Proposed Postgraduate Certificate in Business Analysis and Consulting (PT) (BT/JN)
Proposed Postgraduate Diploma in Transformation Management and Leadership (PT) (BT/JN)

The Advisory Group considered a proposal and Resourcing Plan to introduce the programmes in part-time mode at the Belfast and Jordanstown campuses from September 2020. It noted that:

- the combination of business analytics, consultancy, management and leadership development, all within a technology context, was relatively unusual and would ensure that the programme had a Unique Selling Point for the marketplace;
- PwC would sponsor 15 graduate employees to begin the Postgraduate Certificate in September 2020; this sponsorship would be on an ongoing basis for a minimum number of employees;
- the programmes would also be marketed as open provision.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposal be approved to proceed to planning and evaluation.

Advanced Certificate in Management Practice (PT)

The Advisory Group considered a proposal and Resourcing Plan to offer the Advanced Certificate in Management Practice in part-time mode at an off-campus hotel location (outcentre) for the Young Farmers Club from April/May 2020. It noted that:

- three modules from the existing Advanced Certificate / Diploma in Management Practice framework would be delivered to the client;
- the programme would be delivered, in residential style, by staff from the Department of Management, Leadership and Marketing and by recognised teachers.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposal be approved.

2 ASKING GRADE / ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AMENDMENTS

Diploma in International Foundation Studies (with Pathways)
International Foundation Year in 21 Honours Degrees

The Advisory Group considered a proposal from Access, Digital and Distributed Learning to amend the entry requirements from 2020/21 as follows:

Diploma in International Foundation Studies (with Pathways) (IFP)
International Foundation Year (IFY)

To replace:

- Be aged 18 or over at the date of registration on the Diploma (subject to review of Admissions Policy for pre-18 year old students)

with:

- Be aged 18 years or over upon completion of the Diploma in International Foundation Studies.

International Foundation Year (IFY)

To remove:

- Hold 2 AS Levels or equivalent qualifications.

It was noted that:

- the month by which students were required to be 18 was not specified;
- for the International Foundation Year, a Diploma was only provided as an exit award; the revision should state 'upon completion of the Foundation Year';
- the IFY entry for BSc Hons Business Studies required GCSE Mathematics for admission but the IFP (BAHSS pathway) did not;
- other admission criteria for the IFY included 'Have completed High School education' and this might be better worded as 'Have successfully completed High School education'.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposal be approved, subject to amendments and/or clarification in relation to the four points noted above.

BSc Hons Environmental Science

BSc Hons Environmental Science with Education

BSc Hons Environmental Science with Psychology

The Advisory Group considered a proposal from the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences to change the requirement of compulsory STEM / science A-Level to a preference for a STEM / science A-Level from September 2020 entry, in line with a revision approved for Geography programmes in November (Min 19.175 refers).

Members were of the view that the use of the word 'preference' implied that applicants holding a STEM / science A-Level would be ranked higher in the selection process, and it was noted that this was probably not the Faculty's intention; rather that a STEM / science A-Level would be useful and that students could still cope well on the programme without such a subject.

RECOMMENDED that the proposal be approved, subject to the word 'preference' being reviewed and replaced with a suitable explanatory note.

AGREED that the use of the word 'preference' should also be reviewed for Geography programmes.

3 ENROLMENT ON NEW PROGRAMMES EVALUATED OR APPROVED WITHOUT EVALUATION IN 2018/19

The Advisory Group received a statement of enrolments on new programmes validated or approved without validation in 2018/19 for 2019/20 start. It noted that:

- there had been a low development rate of new courses in the faculties with 16 new Faculty-based courses;

- 20 (out of 48) courses, of which 16 were with partner institutions, had no intake;
- late proposals generally resulted in a poor student intake in the first year;
- the projected numbers for new proposals presented by faculties for consideration by the Advisory Group did not always correspond with those recorded in the Academic Plan and more often were much lower in the first year of launch;
- it was important to have realistic expectations regarding the first year of intake to programmes.

The Group discussed the Chair's proposal that it should consider recruitment data over a three-year period. Professor Durkin stated that there were established systems in place for faculties and the University to monitor student numbers and that the faculties used the best evidence available to support the projected figures in CA1 and 2 forms, including for the first year of recruitment, and that some markets took time to become established. Dr Crothers informed the Advisory Group that faculties received information on how programmes were performing against projected Academic Plan numbers and that decisions about portfolio management were primarily the responsibility of the faculties. The faculties were expected to have sound reasons to retain programmes which might appear unviable on the basis of student numbers.

AGREED that a statement of enrolments on new courses for the first three years for courses approved for 2017/18 and the first two intakes for courses approved for 2018/19 be considered at the next meeting of the Advisory Group in March.

4 RESOURCING PLANS FOR PROGRAMMES UNDERGOING REVALIDATION

The Chair reported that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) had suggested that the Resourcing Plan requirement be extended to courses coming through revalidation, as a non-viable course had been brought to revalidation in 2018/19. It was noted that faculties were expected to monitor the viability of courses on an ongoing basis and identify and process course withdrawal forms for courses where appropriate. The periodic revalidation preparation process (CA6) was a further opportunity for this review. Professor Murphy would discuss a suggestion that a Resourcing Plan be required only if a Faculty proposed to present a course with persistent low numbers of students.

FOR INFORMATION [noted by the Academic Planning Advisory Group]

5 PROGRAMME WITHDRAWALS

Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment

Last intake 2015/16

Access Diploma in Computing, Business and Multimedia at Belfast Metropolitan College (Titanic Quarter).

Last intake 2016/17

FdEng Software Engineering at Belfast Metropolitan College (Castlereagh and Titanic Quarter).

Faculty of Life and Health Sciences

Last intake: 2019/20

BSc Hons Developing Practice in Healthcare (JN);
PgDip/MSc Developing Practice in Healthcare (JN).

AG/AGF