

PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT
(3.11.15)

PRESENT

Professor U McMahon-Beattie (Chair), Dr K Boyce, Dr I Hawthorne-Steele, Mrs H Hogg, Mr J Kennedy, Mrs L McClelland, Professor J McCormack, Mrs A McKenna, Mr M McQuillan, Dr R Moreland, Dr B Murphy, Dr M O'Neill, Mr T O'Neill, Mrs A Scanlon, Mr R Sterritt, Ms R Wasson

CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

1. Pricing Issues across Flexible Frameworks

A meeting between the Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education and the Finance Department was held to discuss possible solutions, where there are overseas students on Masters programmes which results in an inability to charge premium fees to flexible framework students.

The only solution available at this time, is the creation of a new CRN which can carry the premium fee for affected programmes. Whilst this solution enables the correct charging of fees, it results in manual intervention if the module is being supported through Blackboard Learn.

AGREED:

a) that Dr Murphy will ensure this issue is included within the business of Student Recruitment and Marketing Sub-Committee Pricing working group.

2. Ulster Identity Management Project Update

OJEU tender released for a development and support contract to provide a range of Identity and Access Management services to the university with a closing date of 30 November. The panel will meet in early December and hope a supplier will be in place at the start of January. The contract is for one year (with option for further 2 x 12 month extensions). Following contract awarding a series of requirements workshops will be undertaken to ensure all the necessary requirements are fully captured and understood. It is hoped that all elements of a new IAM infrastructure will be in place by Easter 2016 but this is subject to detailed planning and prioritisation.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The terms of reference and membership of the sub-committee was discussed in relation to the reporting of sub-committee business back to Faculty Academic Affairs Committee (or similar).

AGREED:

- a) that the current terms of reference accurately reflect the business of the sub-committee;
- b) that Faculty representatives will confirm how the business of the sub-committee is reported to Faculty, and if further faculty representation is required.

4. ODCM PROJECT UPDATE

Dr Murphy provided the sub-committee with an overview of the Organisational Development and Change Management (ODCM) projects across the University. There are seven project groupings which reflect the main areas of University business: Learning and Teaching, Research and Innovation, Academic Plan, IT and Governance, Physical Build, Communications and Community Engagement. Project groups were initially set up to provide a strategic approach to the move to GBD, however they are now providing a platform for the 2018 strategic development plan.

Within these seven project groups are twenty seven projects. The projects of most interest are within the community engagement project area led by Professor Adair; Transition project 1: Schools, Community and the Workforce and Transition project 2 – the Public Sector, the Economy and Civic Life.

AGREED:

- a) that Dr Murphy would circulate overview information from Professor Adair's project area to the sub-committee as appropriate;
- b) that Dr Murphy would continue to update the sub-committee as appropriate from the transition project groups.

5. PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION PLANNING WORKING GROUP

i. Overview of Planning Process

The planning working group met during the summer period to review the planning process undertaken in 14/15. The planning approach consisted of a series of PCE planning meetings held with Deans between Oct and Dec 2014 to discuss the services the Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education offered, strengths of the flexible frameworks, and development ideas. Using this information Deans identified a strategic direction for the Faculty which was then used to inform the subsequent planning discussions with Heads of School in Jan and Feb 2015. A draft PCE plan was developed at the school level for the 15/16 academic year and sent to HoS for approval.

During the planning period the University experienced in-year funding cuts and an institutional review was initiated, both of which impacted on the ability to resource and plan CPD activity. Whilst, non-MASN and income generation is a key priority for all Schools, it is acknowledged that this is currently a challenging time and there will be indirect impacts on flexible framework activity due to staffing reductions.

ii. Recommendations

The following working group recommendations were AGREED:

- a) that PCE planning was valuable and should continue in 15/16, albeit in a rationalised format;
- b) that initial meetings with Deans take place and invitations then extended to HoS, with the decision to progress flexible framework activity in the School as the responsibility of the HoS;
- c) that Faculty representatives on PCE sub-committee should be included in initial planning meetings with Deans, and receive School plans once agreed;
- d) that the Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education will provide Faculties information on flexible framework activity in a pre-agreed format at specified times of the year to report to the Faculty Academic Development Sub-Committee or similar;
- e) that PCE planning to be a standing item on the PCE Sub-Committee agenda to inform the Faculty Academic Development Sub-Committees.

NOTED:

that the Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education will be represented at the Academic Planning meetings held by Professor Millar in late November/December to begin the 16/17 planning process.

6. FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK REPORTING

i. Annual Reporting Requirement

Flexible frameworks are not subject to revalidation in the same way as other academic programmes, thus there is a requirement that an annual report is provided to Learning and Teaching Committee. Annual reports are sent to Accredited Professional Development Management Board (APDMB) and then to Learning and Teaching Committee. Due to the overview these reports provide, it was agreed at APDMB that they would also be presented at Professional and Continuing Education Sub-Committee.

ii. Certificate of Personal and Professional Development (Level 3 & 4 Framework)

The Certificate of Personal and Professional Development has shown year on year growth. In academic year 14/15 there were 1526 module enrolments across 63 modules by 1364 students, equating to 101.5 FTE an increase of 12.8 FTE compared to 13/14.

Faculty module enrolments for 14/15:

ADDL	120
ADBE	23
ARTS	171
CE	577
LHS	286
SS	244
UBS	105

iii. Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development (Level 7 Framework)

In academic year 14/15 there were 197 enrolments on the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development, growth of 214% on 13/14.

Faculty module enrolments for 14/15:

ADDL	10
ADBE	8
ARTS	10
CE	0
LHS	3
SS	126
UBS	40

iv. Provision of information to Faculty

The Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education provided an example infographic for discussion as a possible way of presenting timely and accurate information for Faculty.

AGREED:

- a) that the infographic is a suitable way of providing updates to Faculty on flexible framework activity;
- b) that the infographic should show Faculty effort across postgraduate, undergraduate and non-credit activity supported through the Centre for Flexible & Continuing Education;
- c) that Faculty information should be provided three times a year at the ends of semester 1,2 and 3 to feed into the appropriate Faculty committee.

7. NON-CREDIT ACTIVITY: SHORT COURSES PILOT

i. Fee Income

The WPM online payment system for short courses without credit has been in use in a pilot format since April 2014 and can be viewed at <http://store.ulster.ac.uk>. During this period a range of courses have been offered through the store (Appendix 1).

- a) During the pilot period short courses have receipted an income of just over £100,706 to date, £22,295 (approx. 22%) of which has been invoiced manually at the request of the business/organisation rather than online payments.
- b) Fee income is currently receipted to the cost centre advised by the course organiser and enables the course organiser to pay for direct course costs. Invoicing is a manual process and results in intervention from the Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education (CFCE) which bears an administrative/resource cost which is not reflected in the current financial model.

- c) Course cancellations by the University have occurred this year, and in instances where purchases have been made over 30 days Finance have advised that bank details be obtained from short course customers so direct payments can be issued. Short course customers have raised concerns in relation to providing this information. To date £2,850 has been refunded to 26 people due to University cancellation of short courses.

ii. Quality Assurance

The short course proposal form is a two page document which gathers the information required to set up and advertise the course. It includes a financial section to ensure that Head of School has oversight of costs prior to issuing approval. All courses are required to be approved by Head of School before they can be offered through the online system. Following discussions around quality assurance processes, it may be appropriate to confirm an institutional process for financial modelling of non-credit activity with sign off at Faculty level.

iii. Identity Management

Short course students do not have an “Ulster” University identity, e.g. e-code for staff, b number for students), which is required to order to access Blackboard Learn, library facilities, Belfast and Magee campus, and campus IT facilities. Manual intervention is required to ensure short course delegates have access to the systems or campus facilities necessary to carry out their study. However, this is not a scalable institutional solution for all short course activity.

iv. Resources

The online short course system is managed by CFCE as part of their remit in supporting institutional CPD activity. At the time of pilot no additional staff resource was given to support the system and it is currently managed by existing CFCE staff. Non-credit bearing short courses are a target for the achievement of diversified income and it is expected that Faculty targets will be assigned in this regard during 16/17. Staff resources are not currently aligned with growth targets.

v. Pilot Recommendations

Recognising the value of short course activity and the potential for income diversification the following recommendations are proposed by the sub-committee:

- a) that the short courses pilot is brought to an end;
- b) a financial model is developed for this activity with the support of Finance to ensure appropriate identification of costs and transparency of income reporting;
- c) staff resources to support growth are identified and employed in line with expected income targets and current manual interventions;
- d) a quality assurance process including sign off at Faculty level is proposed to ensure reputational risk is managed and there is no adverse impact on credit bearing provision;

- e) short course participants are given an Ulster identity which enables access to campus and resources as required.

8. HIGHER LEVEL SKILLS and APPRENTICESHIPS

i. Workforce Development in Northern Ireland Event

The Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education will host a Workforce Development event on Friday 13 November at The Stormont Hotel. This event will showcase the diversity of Ulster's provision in the arena of higher level skills and apprenticeships, highlighting our partnership approach with business and the FE colleges. The event will be opened by Professor McAlister and will include contributions from Department for Employment and Learning, Camden Council, Deloitte, Norbrook, Southern Regional College and Kainos.

ii. Higher Level Apprenticeships

The sub-committee discussed the current pilot approach to higher level apprenticeships and the need to identify pathways from foundation degrees into part time degrees or new level 6 higher apprenticeships to ensure that higher education remains a key partner in the development of learning at levels 4-8.

NOTED:

- a) FE colleges are very well represented with higher level apprenticeships at levels 4 and 5 of which the foundation degree is usually the key learning component.

AGREED:

- b) that a recommendation be made to Learning and Teaching Committee to consider commissioning an institutional working group to look at a strategic approach to higher level apprenticeships.

9. SHORT COURSE PROSPECTUS

The redeveloped institutional prospectus enables the advertising of short course activity alongside all part time and full time provision. The Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education are working with academics across the institution to ensure that all flexible framework activity for semester 2 15/16 is captured and will be advertised when the switch over to the new prospectus is made in early 2016.

NOTED:

- a) that a memo will be circulated to all Heads of Faculty Administration asking for a named individual within the Faculty who can be given access to the short course prospectus. The short course prospectus will provide Faculties the ability to advertise modular credit bearing activity at levels 5/6, e.g. return to practice modules.

Appendix 1: Non Credit Activity During Short Course Pilot

School	Course Title	Course Date	Accepted Students
BMS	Food Law and Food Regulation	Fully Online - Self Taught	2
BMS	Food for Particular Nutritional Uses (PARNUTS)	Fully Online - Self Taught	1
BMS	EU Regulatory Framework for Animal Feeds	Fully Online - Self Taught	1
BMS	EU Food Law for Milk and Dairy Products	Fully Online - Self Taught	1
BMS	Professional Certificate in Medical Retina	07/07/2014	38
PSY	Systematic Reviews in Healthcare	28/07/2014	8
PSY	Qualitative Research Methods	29/07/2014	13
PSY	An Introduction to Economic Evaluation in Healthcare	29/07/2014	4
PSY	SPSS For Beginners	30/07/2014	16
PSY	Action Research	30/07/2014	4
PSY	Linear Regression Using SPSS	31/07/2014	4
ART	Ceramics Short Course	01/08/2014	6
PSY	Introduction to Structural Equation Modelling and Moderated-Mediation in Mplus	01/08/2014	5
PSY	Logistic Regression Models in SPSS and Mplus	04/08/2014	5
PSY	The Analysis of Change Using AMOS and Mplus	08/08/2014	2
ART	Ceramics Evening Course - Beginners	29/09/2014	12
BMS	Professional Certificate in Medical Retina	26/01/2015	31
ART	Ceramics Evening Course - Beginners	26/01/2015	19
LAW	The Law and Business of Film and Television	26/01/2015	1
BE	Effectively Leading your Small Business	23/02/2015	17
HTM	The Wine & Spirit Education Trust Course - Level 1	15/04/2015	21
HTM	The Wine & Spirit Education Trust Course - Level 2	13/05/2015	17
SS	GymFUN: Gymnastics for Teachers (Training Course)	31/08/2015	15
HTM	The Wine & Spirit Education Trust Course - Level 1 (1516)	09/09/2015	5
CMM	Counsellor Self-care and Transformative Practice	12/09/2015	11
HTM	The Wine & Spirit Education Trust Course - Level 3	24/09/2015	3
ART	Silver Jewellery: Make Stacking Rings in a Day	26/09/2015	7
ART	Ceramics Evening Course - Intermediate	05/10/2015	19
HTM	The Wine & Spirit Education Trust Course - Level 2 (1516)	07/10/2015	7
ART	Ceramics Evening Course - Beginners	07/10/2015	2
ART	Silver Jewellery: Make a Silver Linked Bracelet in a Day	24/10/2015	8
ART	Silver Jewellery Night Class	05/11/2015	11
HTM	The Wine & Spirit Education Trust Course - Level 1 (1516)	11/11/2015	2
ART	Silver Jewellery: Make a Necklace or Earrings in a Day	28/11/2015	5
CMM	Counsellor Self-care and Transformative Practice	06/02/2016	2
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