

ULSTER UNIVERSITY
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FORUM
3 October 2018

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2018 at Magee Campus.

Present: Mrs C Davison, Mrs J Kelly (for Mr L Curran), Mrs L Lavery, Mrs T Millar, Mrs H Miller, Mr S McAllister (for Mr F Orr), Mrs S McCall, Mr D McDowell, Mrs D McElwee, Mrs A McKenna (for Dr B Murphy), Mrs M Paris (Chair), Ms C Reid.

Apologies: Mrs J Alleyne, Professor P Bartholomew, Dr P Brogan, Mr J Curran, Mr L Curran, Mrs C McKeown, Mr J Marley, Mr F Orr, Mrs M Sowney.

In Attendance: Mrs C Brown (BMC), Mr H Deighan, Mrs C McIntyre.

THANKS

The Chair thanked Mrs L Lavery for the massive contribution she made to the work of the Forum over the years and wished her every success in her new job at Queen's University.

MINUTES

18.45 The minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2018 were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

18.46 New Degree Algorithm for Foundation degrees (Min 18.27)

FPMs confirmed that Faculties have arrangements in place for progression for those students who enter Ulster University at level 6.

18.47 Minimum and Maximum Cohort Sizes (Min 18.30)

The Chair informed that a paper is going to the next meeting of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC) proposing a minimum student intake of 15 (F/T and P/T combined). Student intake will be subject to annual monitoring.

It was noted that ASQEC supported the Forum recommendation that clawback as a means of managing over-recruitment should not be introduced.

18.48 Pre-requisites (Min 18.32)

FPMs confirmed that CA3 forms had been approved to remove references to pre-requisite modules which must be passed to progress to the next year of study.

Members were reminded that ASQEC had agreed that the concept of pre-requisites be retained but the pass standard for progression should only be specified in course regulations where a PSRB explicitly required it. When there is such a PSRB requirement evidence of same must be provided to the FPM.

18.49 Penalties for Exceeding Word Limits (min 18.33)

The Chair informed that University policy on penalties for exceeding word limits and guidance on workload equivalence is now available on the Quality Enhancement (QE) website.

18.50 Work-Based Learning (WBL) Extensions (Min 18.40)

At the last meeting of the Forum members considered a paper on guidance for WBL, and the application of extenuating circumstances. It was agreed that Colleges should provide clarity in the module handbook in terms of timelines for students to complete the requisite number of hours.

AGREED: i) that the Chair provide a generic template which Course Directors must complete stating the start and expected end dates for WBL;
 ii) that the completed template be returned to the FPM.

18.51 Fitness to Practice Protocol (Min 18.41)

At the last meeting of the Forum, members were asked to confirm that their Fitness to Practice Protocol was being fully implemented. Most partner institutions confirmed that they had a Protocol in place and it was being implemented. NRC and SERC informed that they are in the process of reviewing their Fitness to Practice and Access NI protocols.

There was discussion concerning the perceived tensions between the specific NISC Fitness to Practice requirements for Social Work and the wider requirements of the sector as a whole.

AGREED: i) that a small Working Group comprising Dr P Brogan, Mrs S McCall and Mrs M Sowney, review the Fitness to Practice Protocol taking account of the requirements for the health and social services sector as a whole;
 ii) that the Working Group develop procedures for dealing with circumstances where the Access NI check discloses situations requiring further consideration.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

18.52 Annual Course Review 2017/18

The Chair thanked members for having their annual course review submissions lodged in by the agreed time.

18.53 Annual Notification of Course Delivery Teams

The Chair thanked those partner institutions who forwarded details of the course team delivering a validated programme in 2018/19. She asked HE Co-ordinators to

ensure that where they have not done so already that this information be forwarded to FPMs as soon as possible. The CV of any new staff teaching on the programme should be attached to the notification form.

18.54 Faculty Partnership Manager

The Chair informed that as part of the University's review of the Collaborative Strategy it was agreed that the role of the Subject Partnership Manager be renamed Faculty Partnership Manager (FPM).

18.55 Partnership Handbook

The Chair informed that the August 2018 edition of the Partnership Handbook was now accessible from the QE website. The revisions include:

- adoption of the University's Collaborative Strategy and Principles for Collaborative Partnerships;
- the development of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy (still in draft form);
- expectations for minimum and maximum cohort sizes and the consequences of exceeding approved numbers;
- reinforcement of the expectation that conditions of approval be met before students are admitted;
- updated forms and templates.

18.56 Online Admissions (OLA)

Due to pressures of work and staff shortages it was not possible to extend OLA to all partner institutions this year. The pilots are still continuing.

18.57 External Examiner Induction

The Chair informed that at the last external examiner induction event on 14 September 2018 almost half of the new external examiners were for collaborative programmes. She reminded members that the Course Director must attend the induction if their new external examiner is there.

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

18.58 Members received paper CPF/18/17 a revised Terms of Reference and membership for the Forum, which now makes reference to Data Protection and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

It was noted that Mrs A McKenna would be replacing Dr B Murphy as the representative from Access and Distributed Learning.

DATES OF MEETINGS 2018/19

18.59 Members received paper CPF/18/18 detailing the dates and venues for meetings in the 2018/19 academic year.

The meeting on 23 January 2019 will be held on the Belfast Campus in the afternoon as external examiner induction is being held on that morning.

It was noted that the annual Chairing of Boards of Examiners training event will be held on 2 May 2019.

RECORDING NON RETURNING STUDENTS AND EARLY LEAVERS

18.60 Members considered paper CPF/18/19 on the recording of non returning students and early leavers.

The CCU generates enrolment forms for year 2 returning students at the start of August each year. The re-enrolment forms do not take Supplementary Board decisions into account, and presume that students will progress into year 2.

Where students have to repeat part or all of year 1 these enrolment forms must be amended by the Course Director with the Supplementary Board decision noted, year 2 changed to year 1, and the year 2 modules struck out and replaced with the relevant year 1 modules.

Course Directors have at least 3 opportunities to pick up and correct inaccuracies in student records.

- i) Once enrolment is complete, the CCU emails a password-protected class list to the College for checking. A check would enable, for example, the identification of year 2 students who should be registered as repeating year 1. Course Directors rarely respond at this point (which happens from mid-October), yet this is the ideal opportunity to tidy up records.
- ii) The Course Results Sheets generated for the progress boards in January/February offer a further opportunity to identify anomalies.
- iii) For returning students, the re-enrolment forms which are sent to the CCU should be reviewed.

Course Directors must notify the CCU of early leavers on an on-going basis.

Students are accorded Associate status by the University, but there is no contract between the parties.

After full students have registered at the University, they have under Consumer Protection Law a limited "cooling off period" of up to 14 days in which they may change their mind, withdraw their registration and cancel the contract with the University. The date of online enrolment or the signing of the paper form constitutes the start of the contract, and students may cancel the contract in writing up to 14 days after.

In the case of validated provision, the contract is between the student and the college, and it is this contract which should observe the cooling-off period. Where a student cancels the contract during this period, they should not be registered with the University, and hence will not be counted as an early leaver. This is reflected in the 14 October finance deadline.

A survey of published information on College websites found that in some cases, the cooling off period/right to cancel was missing, wrong or not clearly visible.

- AGREED:
- i) that HE Co-ordinators ensure that Course Directors are aware of the need to properly record non-returning students and early leavers;
 - ii) that HE Co-ordinators check their College arrangements for ensuring that the Consumer Protection Law in regard to the 14 day cooling off period is being adhered to;
 - iii) that the Chair check with the University's Finance Department about a one week extension to allow for the audit of GCSE qualifications.

STUDENT RETENTION

18.61 Members considered paper CPF/18/20 on student retention following the June Boards of Examiners.

The tables clearly show that for most Colleges levels of attrition in 2017/18 for full-time provision were much higher than in 2016/17, with only CAFRE meeting the 10% benchmark and SWC meeting it for Year 2 students only.

The data for part-time programmes showed particularly poor outcomes. It should be noted that no College met the benchmark for first year part-time study, and only CAFRE and SWC met the benchmark for Year 2. Only CAFRE and NWRC met the benchmark for Year 3 part-time study.

With regard to full-time Access provision, whilst there is a slight improvement in some partner Colleges, no College met the 20% benchmark for full-time mode of delivery. Only two Colleges (NRC and NWRC) met the benchmark for part-time Access provision.

Members noted that with some students failing their resits the retention data would make worse reading after the September Boards of Examiners. It was also noted that:

- Cleansing the non-returning students/early leaver data would lower attrition;
- Access provision is being revalidated this academic year and this is an opportunity for course teams to look at module content and assessment;
- Course teams must proactively monitor attendance with early intervention when necessary;
- Professor Bartholomew will be asked to speak at the CAFRE event on Ulster University arrangement for reducing attrition.

STUDENT SUCCESS

18.62 Members considered paper CPF/18/21 on Success 2 data following the June Boards of Examiners.

Members are reminded that the only measurement the University is interested in is Success 2. Success 2 is (Proceed + Award)/Total and is a measurement of the success of all students, regardless of whether they engaged.

It was noted that no College met the agreed benchmarks for Success 2 at the June Boards of Examiners. This was the case for both full-time and part-time provision.

While it is accepted that Success 2 data improves significantly after the resit Board of Examiners it is a major concern to the University, as the awarding body, that so many students failed at the first attempt.

The Chair informed that a major theme for the University this academic year is addressing poor first sit performance. In the past if a student failed a module at level 5 and only received the maximum permitted mark of 40% at the resit it did not affect the final award. Under the new degree algorithm where 40% of level 5 study counts towards the final degree classification, the failed first sit will have a significant adverse impact on the final degree award.

In the past Professor Bartholomew had ruled out introducing the new degree algorithm for Foundation degrees. Members felt it might be worthwhile to undertake a modelling exercise to see what impact the introduction of the 60%/40% (level 5/4) algorithm would have on Foundation degree. If the outcome of the exercise was to disadvantage students the exercise would be taken no further. If students were not disadvantaged then a case could be put to the University to consider extending the new degree algorithm to Foundation degrees.

- AGREED:
- i) that a modelling exercise be undertaken on the following four courses:
 - Fd Computing Software (F/T) at BMC
 - Fd Computing (F/T) at SWC
 - Fd Counselling (P/T) at NWRC
 - Fd Mechatronic Engineering (P/T) at SERC
 - ii) that a report on the outcome from the exercise be considered at the next meeting of the Forum.

AUDIT OF ADMISSIONS

18.63 Members considered paper CPF/18/22 a paper on the outcome from the 2017/18 audit of admissions.

All first year enrolments with the exception of Counselling in 17/18 were reviewed against the University's General Entry Requirements for Foundation Degrees and the offer standard for each course. A paper on the outcome from the review of Counselling provision will be considered at the next meeting. The focus was on level 3 qualifications, since GCSE English and maths evidence is now attached to enrolment forms, and was the subject of a separate review in 2018.

The reviewers identified some issues in all colleges, but in many cases this was due to insufficient information provided on the returns. Many courses had no issues; anomalies where found tended to recur in specific courses, perhaps indicating that individual course teams did not fully understand the regulations. In general the reviewers were satisfied that there was a significant improvement from last year in adherence to the University's General Entry Requirements.

General issues which the reviewers encountered:

- EU qualifications not referred to Partnership Managers, and admission recorded as 'NARIC'. NARIC is not a basis for admission; it assesses comparability of qualifications, but is advisory only. In addition, EU qualifications do not automatically cover GCSE English and maths. The University has a list of acceptable offers for all EU and most International qualifications, specified for English, maths and CCC offers.
- International qualifications not referred to Partnership Managers and not specified on the return (e.g. 'Australian-based qualification').
- APEL admissions not approved by Partnership Managers. This was the subject of a separate review in 2018 and a protocol is now in place.
- One candidate was admitted on the basis of transfer from another Foundation degree in another institution to a non-cognate Foundation degree. It is the responsibility of the partner to check that the candidate meets *their* entry requirements.
- NVQ Level 3 Diplomas are not on the published list of acceptable alternative qualifications.
- One candidate was admitted on the basis of 2 AS-levels which now only account for 40% of an A level and require one further A level.
- Grades and size of award were not disclosed for BTEC admissions.
- Access equivalence for offers below CCD was not applied uniformly.
- Grades declared did not always add up to the tariff.
- Some candidates were admitted on the basis of 1 A level only, and it was unclear how the offer standard could be met.

The two largest issues encountered were the following:

- A large numbers of candidates across most colleges were admitted on the basis of a Pass or a Merit in one Subsidiary Diploma, sometimes plus COPE. It was unclear how such candidates met the offer standard since a Pass is worth 16 points, and a Merit is worth 32.
- Access equivalence for offers below CCD was not applied uniformly.

AGREED: i) that only admissions on the basis of the Subsidiary Diploma will be reviewed next year;
 ii) that the chair provided clarification on Access equivalence for offers below CCD.

OPTIONS FOR APPROVAL/ACCREDITATION OF FOUNDATION DEGREE IN COUNSELLING

18.64 As the FPM for Counselling was not present it was agreed that paper CPF/18/23 on options for the professional approval/accreditation of Foundation degrees provision in Counselling be carried over to the next meeting of the Forum.

It was noted that professional accreditation was probably a matter for the University to make a decision on and members would await further instruction from the Faculty.

REVIEW OF ABSENCE/ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROTOCOL

18.65 Members considered paper CPF/18/24 a review of College absence/attendance policy and procedure.

It was noted that as partner institutions collaboration with a number of awarding bodies their absence policy is generic as opposed to being specific to Ulster University.

AGREED: that HE Co-ordinators reflect on the outcome of the review and report back to the next meeting that their absence policy meets their institutions requirements.

PRINCIPLES FOR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

18.66 Members received paper CPF/18/25 detailing the principles for collaborative partnerships which form part of the University's new Collaborative Strategy.

From 2018/19 all new collaborative arrangements must adhere to these Principles.

ANNUAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT EVENT AT CAFRE

18.67 Members received paper CPF/18/26 a draft programme for the annual staff conference at CAFRE on 12 October 2018.

The theme for this year is 'Good Practice and Design' taking account of the outcomes from the QAA Quality Review visits. The keynote speaker will be Professor Bartholomew, PVC Education, Ulster University. The sessions will allow partner institutions to showcase good practice within their College.

MARKETING ACTIVITY

18.68 Members received paper CPF/18/27 on current marketing activity being undertaken by the University.

Employability and Marketing continue to support the Forum in collaboration with partner institutions. Marketing material will be updated to promote progression to programmes at Ulster University.

Applicants (or those made offers, as applicable) will be invited by text, email and hard copy postcard (where applicable) to a range of applicant information events. This information will be circulated to colleges and included on a dedicated landing page <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/events>. Dates and times are currently being organised.

Requests for presentation to both 1st and 2nd year students are welcomed by the Student Recruitment Team. These are generally delivered at the beginning of semester 1 to promote the progression to University and the key factors these students need to consider. HE Co-ordinators should contact the FPM if they wish to arrange a presentation in their College.

GDPR AND EXAMINATION INFORMATION

18.69 Members received paper CPF/18/28 on student rights regarding examinations under GDPR legislation.

It was noted that while students have the right to obtain key information about their exam results, it does not give them the right to copies of their answers to exam questions or for their paper to be remarked.

The legislation also provides protection for students with regard to publishing examination information in public spaces.

MATTERS ARISING FROM INFORMATION PAPERS

18.70 Members received information papers from FPMs and HE Co-ordinators on a range of matters relating to collaborative activity.

No matters required discussion.

Duration: 2 hrs 10 mins

ACTION SHEET

	MINUTE	ACTION	ACTION BY	DEADLINE
1	18.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) that the Chair provide a generic template which Course Directors must complete stating the start and expected end dates for WBL; ii) that the completed template be returned to the FPM. 	<p>Mrs Paris</p> <p>HE Co-ordinators</p>	<p>31/10/18</p> <p>30/11/18</p>
2	18.51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) that a small Working Group comprising Dr P Brogan, Mrs S McCall and Mrs M Sowney, review the Fitness to Practice Protocol taking account of the requirements for the health and social service sector as a whole; ii) that the Working Group develop procedures for dealing with circumstances where the Access NI check discloses situations requiring further consideration. 	<p>Dr P Brogan, Mrs S McCall, Mrs M Sowney</p>	<p>30/11/18</p>
3	18.60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) that HE Co-ordinators ensure that Course Directors are aware of the need to properly record non-returning students and early leavers; ii) that HE Co-ordinators check their College arrangements for ensuring that the Consumer Protection Law in regard to the 14 day cooling off period is being adhered to; iii) that the Chair check with the University's Finance Department about a one week extension to allow for the audit of GCSE qualifications. 	<p>HE Co-ordinators</p> <p>HE Co-ordinators</p> <p>Mrs Paris</p>	<p>31/10/18</p> <p>31/10/18</p> <p>5/10/18</p>
4	18.62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) that a modelling exercise be undertaken on the following four courses: 	<p>HE Co-ordinators Mrs Paris Mrs Reid</p>	<p>30/11/18</p>

5	18.63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fd Computing Software (F/T) at BMC • Fd Computing (F/T) at SWC • Fd Counselling (P/T) at NWRC • Fd Mechatronic Engineering (P/T) at SERC 	Mrs Paris Mrs Reid	31/12/18
		ii) that a report on the outcome from the exercise be considered at the next meeting of the Forum.		
		i) that only admissions on the basis of the Subsidiary Diploma will be reviewed next year;		
6	18.65	ii) that the chair provided clarification on Access equivalence for offers below CCD.	Mrs Paris	31/10/18
		that HE Co-ordinators reflect on the outcome of the review and report back to the next meeting that their absence policy meets their institutions requirements.		