

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/21/3d)

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

11 March 2021

Agenda Item 6.1.4

COVER SHEET

DEPARTURES AND VARIATIONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S REGULATORY
FRAMEWORK:

Unit 29: School of Medicine

Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS)

Presenter: Professor A McKillop

Action is required of the Committee:

To consider a request from the Faculty of Life and Health sciences to approve the different exit award titles and a case for the BSc Hons exit award not to have a specific final-year dissertation/project module.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

DEPARTURE AND VARIATIONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

MBBS MEDICINE

Unit of Revalidation 19

Approval sought from University ASQEC for:

- Deviation for exit award title from the parent award title;
- Exit award of BSc (Hons) being available;
- New regulations which differ from standard regulation templates.

The Faculty of Life & Health Sciences/School of Medicine would like to present the following cases and seek approval from ASQEC for the approaches taken:

1. A case for the exit award title differing from the parent award.

The word 'medicine' is synonymous with 'being a doctor', and Doctor of Medicine is a title protected by the Medical Act 1983. Medical degrees are often at bachelor level – indeed the MBBS is a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery. Degree courses for primary UK medical qualifications include the Bachelor of Medicine (BM or MB) as a single degree, but it is more often accompanied by a second degree of Bachelor of Surgery (BS, BCh, BChir or ChB).

It is important that graduates with an exit award fully understand that they cannot practice as a doctor of medicine as they have not completed the accredited programme. By not using the term 'medicine' in the award this removes any doubt and confusion on this matter and continues to protect the title 'medicine' under the law. The course team are therefore proposing the use of 'Medical Sciences' for the terminology for the exit awards.

We seek approval from ASQEC in support of this approach.

2. A case for the BSc (Hons) exit award.

For a BSc (Hons) award a dissertation/project, a sustained piece of work, is a normal expectation in the final level (level 6), as per the University's Programme Approval, Management and Review Handbook. The MBBS programme is a clinical programme with extensive placements throughout the 4-year programme. This requirement to cover a wide range of clinical specialities by the professional body (GMC) would not warrant the introduction of a 'specific' research titled module. However, the course does have a number of independent projects that represent a sustained piece of work throughout the programme.

Within the MBBS programme, both year 2 and year 3 are at level 6, which is the final level of the exit award, therefore all work within these two years can be considered in determining whether or not it meets the requirement as a 'sustained piece of work'. Within second,

transition (T), year, students carry out an independent sustained project in the format of the Student Selected Component (SSCT). This is completed during a 6-week protected time SSC rotation. It is normally one of the following:

- A clinical poster representing an audit or service evaluation or R&D activity; or
- A 3000-word essay on Humanities, e-learning or Education; or
- A sketch book and discursive criticism of the work.

In third, penultimate (P), year, students complete another Student Selected Components based in General Practice, again with protected time. This is a further independent and sustained piece of work involving a Quality Improvement Project (QIP) at their General Practice. They will spend a total of 50 days over the academic year at the practice (10 weeks), and the QIP will include a reflective element on aspects which impacted on the outcome or success of the project.

The marking criteria for the SSCT and SSCP, require a critical review and evaluation of evidence in relation to the subject matter which is informed by current research and practice in the area. **These are both independent projects which represent a sustained piece of work** and therefore the course team believe that the requirements for the exit award to be an Honours award are met.

We seek approval from ASQEC in support of this.

3. MBBS Regulations

The General Medical Council (GMC) require all new providers of medical education to have a contingency partner and this was identified as St George's University of London (SGUL). SGUL was chosen as the contingency partner because the 4-year MBBS programme it delivers aligns with the Strategy for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (SLaTE) of Ulster University, in relation to better outcomes for students and society and better learning experiences for students, and the enhanced primary care focus in its curriculum than is found in many other MBBS 4-year programmes. In addition, SGUL has successfully acted as a contingency partner for other institutions. Contingency arrangements require that our students are regulated in a manner consistent with the approach taken at SGUL.

The MBBS Regulations are based upon those of our contingency partner which have been written in order to align as closely as possible to the existing regulation template for Ulster University for Integrated Masters degrees. This template was chosen as the final level of attainment of the MBBS degree (level 7), albeit that the award is a Bachelor award. The QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications recognises that while primary qualifications in medicine are termed as Bachelor degrees, that they typically include study to at least four full-time academic years in Northern Ireland, of which study equivalent to at least one full-time academic year is at level 7. For historical reasons the qualification retains the title 'Bachelor'; the use of the title 'Dr' by medical doctors is an historical abbreviation for the profession and does not indicate a qualification at doctoral level.

Therefore, using the University's Level 7 Integrated Masters template to describe SGUL regulations was deemed the most appropriate route to take.

Regulations for medical degrees are complicated; this takes into consideration patient safety which is at the core of the General Medical Council's (GMC) Promoting Excellence: standards for medical education and training. Students must meet the learning outcomes required at appropriate points in the programme. **The regulations as presented have been**

approved by the GMC at both the Stage 3 and Stage 5 events prior to us being allowed to recruit students. They also ***align to those of our contingency partner*** and have been ***externally verified by the validation panel members as being appropriate*** for an MBBS programme.

We seek approval from ASQEC in support of the MBBS regulations, which are attached.

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