

ULSTER UNIVERSITY
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FORUM
13 April 2016

Minutes of the Collaborative Partnerships Forum held on 13th April 2016 at Magee.

Present: Mr L Curran, Mrs V Darrah, Mrs C Davison, Dr M Keenan, Mrs S McCall, Mr D McDowell, Mrs D McElwee, Mr J Marley, Mrs T Millar, Mrs H Miller, Mrs M Paris (Chair), Mr P Quinn, Ms C Reid, Mr A Serplus (for Mrs L Lavery).

Apologies: Mrs J Alleyne, Mr J Curran, Dr P Irving, Mrs L Lavery, Professor D McAlister, Professor R Millar, Mrs M Sowney.

In Attendance: Miss J Atkinson (16.36), Miss B Burns, Mr H Deighan, Mrs A Gaston, Mrs C McIntyre (min 16.34).

THANKS

The Chair thanked Dr P Irving for the professional and approachable manner in which she carried out her duties as a Subject Partnerships Manager, in particular her work in developing and supporting the Counselling network. She also thanked Mrs Darrah for her expertise and clarity of judgement in undertaking her work in the Collaborative Courses Unit (CCU). She thanked both of them for their invaluable contributions to the work of the Collaborative Partnerships Forum.

MINUTES

16.25 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2016 were confirmed.

MATTERS ARISING

16.26 Outcomes from the 2014/15 Annual Course Review (Min 16.13)

Members noted that the seven recommendations emanating from the 2014/15 annual course review have been actioned or will be addressed in upcoming staff development events.

- Agreed:
- i) that the QMAU forward to SPMs the contact details of the member of staff in partner institutions with overall responsibility for ensuring all information is approved by Ulster University prior to publication.
 - ii) that the Chair arrange for individual SPMs to review the Plagiarism Policy in place in partner institutions.

16.27 Course Consolidations (Min 16.23)

The Chair informed that she has written to the PVC (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) regarding the four programmes offered in partner institutions affected by closures and course consolidations within the University.

Professor McAlister has asked that marketing and associated course materials provided to students on these programmes be monitored to ensure that their prior expectations of progression opportunities are accurately informed.

Agreed: that Ms Reid, Mrs McCall and Dr Keenan review the information provided to students regarding progression from the four programmes affected, and report to the next meeting of the Forum.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

16.28 Collaborative Courses Register

The Chair informed that the developer working on the new collaborative courses register has now left the University. She has been in contact with the Director of Access, Digital and Distributed Learning who has informed that there is no resource at present within his Department to take forward this piece of work.

Professor McAlister has advised that she will be meeting shortly with the Head of the Quality Management and Audit Unit to discuss HEFCE's Revised Operating Model for Higher Education Quality Assessment. Thereafter she will be in a better position to advise on the resources needed to address any perceived gaps or shortcomings.

16.29 Annual Course Review 2015/16

The arrangements, and updated forms, for the 2015/16 annual course review are now available on the Quality Management and Audit Unit website.

16.30 Update on Revisions to Enrolment Protocol 2017/18

The Chair noted that the Collaborative Courses' Unit together with the SPMs would bring a protocol to the Forum in the next academic year to accommodate the revisions agreed at the last meeting.

FAST TRACK PART-TIME FOUNDATION DEGREES

16.31 Members considered paper CPF/16/11 a survey of entry requirements for fast track part-time Foundation degrees for 2015/16 entry.

In 2015/16 there were 28 versions of fast track part-time Foundation degrees listed on the programme database, based on a total of 19 distinct programmes. The fast-track route differs from the normal part-time route as students take 120 credits over three semesters in two years. The part-time route tends to be 80 credits over two semesters in three years. The fast-track route was originally designed for what might be termed academic high fliers; in other words, applicants who had high

UCAS tariff (although not high enough for entry to the University course), who were in relevant employment, and who were deemed capable of undertaking full-time work and what is effectively a full-time study load, continuously over two years. The regulations reflect this, as the expectation is that these students are more able, and hence more likely to progress between years, with the maximum permitted failure of 20 credits between year 1 and year 2.

Faculties noted an increasing problem of students failing more than 20 credits between years, and hence being unable to progress. This is complicated by the observation that some students have been admitted based on APEL, which is not advisable for the fast track since it cannot measure high achievement easily. Some students are on Higher Apprenticeships, from which they have to withdraw where the Apprenticeship is based on the fast-track route, since they find themselves unable to complete in two years, as required by DEL. DEL has since modified its guidance, encouraging Colleges to offer the normal part-time route as well as the fast track for Apprenticeships.

HE Co-ordinators confirmed that all fast track students are interviewed prior to being accepted onto the course. At the interview it is explained to them the intensity of the programme and the commitment required from them. These interviews are on a one to one basis or as a group. As these students are in employment their employers are investing substantially in their employees and encourage and support them while on this programme.

It was noted that the UCAS tariff for the 28 fast track programmes ranged from 80 to 200. Members expressed concern over the wide range of published UCAS tariffs although they accepted that the actual entry grades could, in some cases, be much higher.

Members agreed that the entry requirements for fast track part-time Foundation degrees should ideally be pitched at a minimum of 2 'A' levels (160 UCAS tariff). However, this could only be offered as guidance as Faculties are at liberty to set their own entry requirements.

- Agreed:
- i) that a small survey of 3 programmes be undertaken to track a cohort of students enrolled on a fast track part-time Foundation degree in 2015/16. The programmes are:
 - a) FdEng Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering at NRC.
 - b) FdSc Applied Industrial Sciences at SRC.
 - c) FdSc Sustainable Construction at SWC.
 - ii) that HE Co-ordinators for the above 3 programmes provide the relevant SPM with the names and entry grades of students on these courses;
 - iii) that the Working Group report to the next meeting of the Forum.

PROGRESS FROM FOUNDATION DEGREES

16.32 Members considered paper CPF/16/12 on full-time progression routes from FE Colleges by course and Faculty.

An analysis was conducted of progression rates by cohort and college for 2015/16, for Foundation Degrees, Access Diplomas and AB degrees. This analysis considered full-time to full-time progression only, and AB to Degree. It was noted that Access provision is concentrated in two faculties; however, students may progress to *all* faculties. For example, there were 94 full-time Access students in Social Sciences who progressed to Ulster University courses, but not all to Social Sciences courses.

The overall progression by College from full-time to full-time courses in 2015/16:

College	Total eligible to progress in 15/16 (FT)	Total who progressed in 15/16 (FT)	Percentage
BMC	293	92	31%
NWRC	263	49	19%
SRC	288	88	31%
SWC	273	88	32%
NRC	42	12	29%
SERC	111	45	41%

Members noted that these figures did not include students who were on leave of absence or who had taken time out. They also noted that NRC and SERC were building capacity within their institutions and the figures would be significantly different next year.

It was suggested that Faculties might use the data to prioritise those subject areas where progression is poor.

Agreed: that Mr Marley, Mrs McCall and Mrs Sowney carry out a further analysis of progression by all Access students per Faculty and report to the next meeting of the Forum.

ONLINE REGISTRATION FOR ASSOCIATE STUDENTS

16.33 Members considered paper CPF/16/13 from the Working Group investigating online applications for Associate Students.

The Working Group considered the scope for a pilot for online applications for September 2016 entry based on two stages: online applications and subsequent module enrolment.

Two courses were identified for the pilot, the FdSc in Business Information Technology at NRC (run over three campuses), and the FdSc in Interactive Design at BMC.

The Admissions Office will enable online application for these courses, to be available from July 2016. The Application Checklist for Associate Students will hold the following fields: Name, Programme Selection, Personal Information, Address and Telephone Numbers, Country Information, Education and Qualifications, and Application Confirmation. The Admissions Office will prepare a short how-to guide on how to apply online.

The college Course Directors will select the students for admission, and send a complete list to the SPM and the CCU. This will be based on a template containing Surname, Forename and Date of Birth. Students will be invited to apply online, by submitting the checklist information. The CCU will reconcile the student list from the college with the online application list for the course, and accept those who have legitimately applied. The CCU will then generate enrolment forms for these students, with the relevant modules pre-populated on the forms, and return these printed forms to the Course Directors. Students will (1) sign these forms, (2) attach evidence of GCSE English (and mathematics if required), and (3) attach photographs if student cards are required. The Course Directors will return these forms to Finance in the University.

Once Finance is satisfied that payment of fees has been made by each college, they will forward the forms to the CCU. It is at this stage that online module enrolment will take place. At a set date, staff from Admissions, SPMs and/or the CCU will go out to the colleges to assist students to register for their modules online. As this is a pilot, assistance from the University will be offered, but it is hoped that in future, Colleges should be able to manage this simple process alone, or with SPM support.

Agreed: that the Working Group meet with the HE Co-ordinators and Course Directors from the two programmes involved in the pilot, to outline the online registration arrangements.

AFFILIATE STAFF

16.34 Mrs McIntyre presented paper CPF/16/14 an update on Affiliate Staff.

A total of 28 new applications were received in 2015/16 with 111 renewals from 2014/15.

Affiliate Staff status is renewed on an annual basis with current staff accounts due to expire on 31 October 2016. Staff will be advised of this by e-mail in mid-October. If no action is taken to renew the account it will be closed.

HE Co-ordinators were reminded that if a new account is not provisioned within 30 days it will be removed from the system. Should an account not be accessed within

a 90-day period, the account will be suspended and the user will have to create a new password.

QMAU will be contacting colleges in June with a list of current Affiliate Staff, and HE Co-ordinators are asked to notify the Unit of any withdrawals.

ANNUAL UPDATE FROM THE COLLABORATIVE COURSES UNIT

- 16.35 Mrs Darrah presented paper CPF/16/15 an annual update of activity and matters relating to the Unit.

There are currently 6171 students registered on validated programmes at partner institutions and there will be additional enrolments expected up until the end of June 2016. There is an increase of 18 programmes from last academic year to 234.

The Collaborative Courses Unit have almost completed inputting the marks following the Progress Boards in January.

The next version of the University Course Results Sheets will be emailed to Course Directors early May in good time for the Boards of Examiners. These important documents should immediately be checked and any errors/queries directed to the Collaborative Courses Unit. Amendments can be made and a further copy issued therefore ensuring that the CRS presented at the Boards of Examiners contain the details of all students registered.

LIBRARY SERVICES

- 16.36 Miss Atkinson presented paper CPF/16/16 an annual report on Library usage and issues arising from FE College Librarians.

In the last 12 months there were two meetings between the Library and the Librarians in partner institutions. These meetings always have a training or developmental aspect for attendees, benefitting where possible from in-house expertise from Ulster University Library staff and based on needs identified by Partner Librarians. In July 2015 the meeting featured a presentation on the Customer Excellence Course for Library staff developed in-house by the Library at Ulster, while the February 2106 meeting included a presentation and discussion on the recent use of online feedback surveys by Ulster Library.

The main processes of supporting the FE Colleges, assessing and reporting on the library resources in the colleges for validation and re-validation, has been progressing smoothly in the last 12 months with no significant issues or difficulties being reported.

Sub-Librarians continue to provide support to fully registered Ulster students in partner institution and have delivered information literacy sessions (covering introduction and use of Ulster Library resources) either on request or at the initiation of Ulster Sub librarians.

Associate students have library membership and can borrow book from our libraries as well as access print materials. They can also access inter-campus loans. For

the 2015/16 academic year up to the end of March 2016 the numbers of books borrowed were low:

Home site	Issues (inc. renewals)
Belfast Metropolitan College	17
College of Agriculture Food & Rural Enterprise	5
Northern Regional College	3
North West Regional College	72
Southern Regional College	0
South Eastern Regional College	0
South West Regional College	19

Total **116**

There is no right of access to the University's electronic resources (i.e. databases, electronic journals and electronic books) for Associate Students.

Our stated aim is to "provide second level support". It appears that most associate students are accessing the book resources they need from their own FE Library. This should indicate the success in the role of our Sub-Librarians in helping identify the resources needed for each course as part of the validation process.

Recognised teachers and staff in partner institutions teaching Associate Students on Ulster University approved courses who have been approved as Affiliate Staff by the QMAU will have access to the full range of online resources provided by the Library.

In period 1 September 2015 to 31 March 2016 there was minimal uptake of this service. From list of 133 currently registered affiliate staff there was 120 accesses by 4 individuals. The top user accounted for 83% of the total. This indicates that less than 4% of affiliate staff entitled to have access to our licensed e-resources have made any use of the facility.

- Agreed:
- i) that HE Co-ordinators ensure that Associate Students are made aware that they no longer have access to the University's electronic resources;
 - ii) that Library Services be asked to make a presentation at the annual conference on 21 October 2016;
 - iii) that SPMs liaise with their Faculty Sub-Librarians to advise Course Directors of databases relevant to their subject areas.

MARKETING WORKING GROUP

16.37 Mr Quinn presented paper CPF/16/17 on marketing activity.

Marketing staff and careers teachers in partner institutions now have access to Edlink, an online portal providing key statistics on their own institution, their past students currently attending Ulster University and details on post graduate students. SPM's can also register to use this portal.

The Associate Student pages on the Ulster University website have now been updated. Filming current and past Associate Students will take place across the University campuses shortly for inclusion on the website.

A page on articulation routes is currently in draft form, and which will be forwarded to the Chair prior to going live.

Employability and Marketing will be making contact, as agreed within the Working Group, to provide presentations to first year Foundation Degree students further promoting the benefits of the Associate Student status and the potential progression routes. Communication has been sent to all colleges offering the service and dates are in the process of being agreed.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

16.38 Members considered a number of upcoming staff development events.

A Chairing of Boards of Examiners staff development event will be held on the morning of 12th May 2016. This event is targeted at new Chairs and those Chairs who have previously been trained but wish to have refresher training.

An informal writing workshop on responding to External Examiner reports will be held on the afternoon of 12th May 2016. This event will be held in Jordanstown with video-conferencing available in Coleraine and Magee. It is open to all staff.

An event on the management of the annual cycle will be held in early to mid September 2016. Further details and a programme for this event will be issued in due course.

The annual staff development day for HE staff in partner institutions will be held on Friday 21st October 2016 in CAFRE. Members were asked to suggest a theme for the event. They were also asked to advise the QMAU of any interesting or innovative projects within their institution which they would like to showcase at the event.

REVIEW OF THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FOR SUBJECT NETWORKS

16.39 Members considered paper CPF/16/19, a draft revised External Examiner report for subject networks.

Initially the plan was to modify the existing External Examiner report to include references to specific comments regarding individual parties within a network.

However, the revisions required were substantial, and as such it was decided to revise the existing External Examiner Subject Network Form.

External Examiners will now be required to provide a general comment, followed by a separate comment for each college/campus/location where appropriate. This requirement will be highlighted in each section of the Form.

Members endorsed the revised Form which will be used for the academic session 2015/16.

TRANSITION PAPER

- 16.40 Members received paper CPF/16/20 on progression routes affected by the Greater Belfast move.

It was noted the Faculty of Art, Design and the Built Environment and the Faculty of Computing and Engineering will be most affected by the move. Information is still awaited from the Faculty of Arts.

MATTERS ARISING FROM INFORMATION PAPERS

- 16.41 Members received information papers from SPM's and HE Co-ordinators on matters relating to collaborative activity.

The Chair reaffirmed the University's position that students on all programmes approved by Ulster must have GCSE English grade C, or University-approved equivalent. The Maths requirement is more subject specific and is agreed at a Faculty level; however, most Faculties do not accept level 2 essential skills in application of number.

The issue regarding the payment of fees for summer bridging was raised. If a student is undertaking 40 credit points summer bridging on a part-time basis they are required to pay the full fees (currently £574) on the day of enrolment. There are no payment options available to them. This is a significant amount of money to hand out in a lump sum and could be prohibitive for some students.

It was agreed that Ms Reid take up the matter with the University's Finance Department.

As there were no other matters the papers were taken as read.

Duration: 2 hours 5 minutes

ACTION SHEET

	MINUTE	ACTION	ACTION BY	DEADLINE
1	16.26	<p>i) that the QMAU forward to SPMs the contact details for the member of staff in partner institutions with overall responsibility for ensuring all information is approved by Ulster University prior to publication.</p> <p>ii) that the Chair arrange for individual SPMs to review the Plagiarism Policy in place in partner institutions.</p>	<p>QMAU</p> <p>Chair</p>	<p>30/4/16</p> <p>30/4/16</p>
2	16.27	Ms Reid, Mrs McCall and Dr Keenan review the information provided to students regarding progression from the four programmes affected and report to the next meeting of the Forum.	Mrs Reid, Mrs McCall & Dr Keenan	24/6/16
3	16.31	<p>i) that a small survey of 3 programmes be undertaken to track a cohort of students enrolled on a fast track part-time Foundation degree in 2015/16. The programmes are:</p> <p>a) FdEng Mechanical and Manufacturing at SWC.</p> <p>b) FdSc Applied Industrial Sciences at SRC.</p> <p>c) FdSc Sustainable Construction at SWC.</p> <p>ii) that HE Co-ordinators for the above 3 programmes provide the relevant SPM with the names and entry grades of students on these courses;</p> <p>iii) that the Working Group report to the next meeting of the Forum.</p>	<p>Working Group</p> <p>HE Co-ordinators</p> <p>Working Group</p>	<p>24/6/16</p> <p>27/5/16</p> <p>31/8/16</p>
4	16.32	that Mr Marley, Mrs McCall and Mrs Sowney carry out a further analysis of progression by Access	Mr Marley, Mrs McCall & Mrs Sowney	24/6/16

		students per Faculty and report to the next meeting of the Forum.		
5	16.33	that the Working Group meet with the HE Co-ordinators and Course Directors for the two programmes involved in the pilot to outline the online registration arrangements.	Working Group	27/5/16
6	16.36	i) that HE Co-ordinators ensure that Associate Students are made aware that they no longer have access to the University's electronic resources;	HE Co-ordinators	24/6/16
		ii) that Library Services be asked to make a presentation at the annual conference on 21 October 2016;	Library Services	21/10/16
		iii) that SPM's liaise with their Faculty Sub-Librarians to advise Course Directors of databases relevant to their subject areas.	SPM's	27/5/16