

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held on 20 June 2016 at the Jordanstown campus

PRESENT

Professor D A McAlister (Chair), Dr M Black, Dr C Carruthers, Miss C Cochrane, Professor D Hazlett, Ms A Honan, Professor J Jędrzejewski, Dr M Keenan, Ms S McCloy (for Mr D McGivern), Professor U McMahan-Beattie, Professor G McMullan, Professor B Murphy, Mr M Quigg

APOLOGIES

Professor A Adair, Dr M Boyd, Professor P Carmichael, Professor C Curran, Professor P Hanna, Professor D Heenan, Professor F Lyons, Professor L Maguire, Mr D McGivern, Professor M McHugh, Professor A McKillop, Dr A Melvin, Professor R J Millar, Professor I Montgomery, Dr R Moreland

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs C G Avery, Mr A G Faulkner, Professor R Fee (for min 16.45)

UNRESERVED

16.37 MINUTES

The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2016 were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

16.38 MEMBERSHIP

The Chair welcomed Dr Clare Carruthers as the new Learning and Teaching Co-ordinator for the Ulster University Business School and Dr Michaela Keenan attending as the Faculty of Art, Design and Built Environment representative, pending appointment of a new Learning and Teaching Co-ordinator in place of Dr Tim McLernon.

16.39 MINUTES

The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2016 were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

16.40 External Quality Developments (Min 16.5)

The Chair reported that the White Paper, including the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), and HEFCE's proposals for Quality Assessment had now been published. Senate had received a briefing on HEFCE's revised operating model for

quality assessment and agreed to set up a working group to prepare for next year's Annual Accountability Review.

Former Minister Farry had signed up the NI universities to level 1 of the TEF and participation in other levels would be a ministerial decision. It was noted that HE sector representatives would meet to discuss this matter in the near future.

16.41 Grade Point Average (Min 16.7)

The Committee noted the terms of reference and membership for the GPA Working Group approved by Senate at its April meeting (Paper No LTC/16/8).

The Working Group had met twice to date and a representative from Oxford Brookes University had given a presentation to the last meeting. Professor A Moore, Chair of the Working Group, had attended a London conference on 15 June and a further meeting of the group was scheduled for later this month. The Committee would receive a paper in the Autumn setting out the group's proposals.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

16.42 Exceptional Routes to HE for Disabled Students

The Committee noted that under Project 18 of DEL's HE strategy, *Graduating to Success*, DEL/DfE had recently provided a policy update on its plan for a scheme to support the admission of disabled students. It was envisaged that a pilot could begin in 2017 for 2018 admissions. It would involve reduced grades/points offers while meeting all minimum entry requirements, parallel UCAS and Access entry routes, and the assessment and verification of medical evidence by an expert independent panel. Eligibility would not guarantee admission and the autonomy of HEIs would be protected.

16.43 Learning and Teaching Awards 2016

The Chair thanked the Students' Union for running the well-managed Learning and Teaching Awards competition to recognise excellent practice which had received approximately 200 nominations. The Committee agreed to convey its congratulations to the following successful award recipients:

Excellence in Placement/Employability Support	Dr Malachy Ó Néill
Excellence in Research Supervision	Dr Gabriel Guarino
Excellence in Teaching: Postgraduate Teacher/ Demonstrator	Mr Richard Gamble
Ulster Team of the Year	Mindful Transition Team
Excellence in Student Support	Dr Stephen Milligen
Excellence in Teaching - Faculty of Art, Design and the Built Environment	Mrs Deborah Fraser
Excellence in Teaching - Faculty of Arts	Dr Tom Maguire
Excellence in Teaching - Faculty of Computing and Engineering	Professor Martin McKinney

Excellence in Teaching - Faculty of Life and Health Sciences	Dr Paul McKenzie
Excellence in Teaching - Faculty of Social Sciences	Dr Anne Smith
Excellence in Teaching - Ulster University Business School	Ms Marian Norwood
Inspirational Teacher of the Year	Dr Lynsey Hollywood
Excellence in Student Representation	Ms Ann Doherty

16.44 LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

The Chair presented the executive summary of the mid-cycle review of the implementation and impact of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy (2013/14 - 2017/18) (Paper No LTC/16/9 - full report available at BoardPacks 365). An interim review of progress made in the first three years had been agreed at the March meeting of the Committee in response to a recommendation arising from the KPMG Internal Audit (min 16.6 refers).

The review, conducted in two stages by Mr Gabriel Jezierski, involved a desk-based review of a wide range of internal documentary evidence, including datasets on key metrics such as NSS, DLHE and retention statistics, and face-to-face semi-structured interviews with a range of staff and students. The commentary was provided in four sections, viz Institutional, Sector-wide, External Environment and International contexts. Each section detailed progress to date and points for reflection and consideration.

The Committee noted that despite the turbulent external environment and multi-layered range of internal challenges there was much evidence of progress. The Chair highlighted the following:

- there had been a very significant and noticeable increase in engagement with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) UK professional Standards Framework, the internal 'ENHANCE' Professional and Development and Recognition Scheme, and increased perception in the value of that engagement;
- Faculty and School leaders were moving forward the important research-in-teaching agenda, with synergies between research, teaching, scholarship and research-led teaching;
- the embedding of key strategic ingredients such as Ulster Graduate qualities, Ulster Principles of Assessment and Feedback, Employability, and curriculum renewal and programme innovation was being considered at validation and revalidation panel meetings;
- there were rich examples of how Schools were implementing the Strategy in setting up supportive partnerships via staff-student fora of different types and a clear institutional position in the 'Proposed Model of Student Engagement at Ulster';
- the University was playing a major role in supporting the economic agenda in Northern Ireland and further afield through the provision of its portfolio and the

supply of high-quality, sought-after undergraduates and postgraduates, evidenced through DLHE data;

- widening participation had been a major success, with considerable evidence of progress and good stories at undergraduate and pre-degree levels from non-traditional learners;
- the 'International agenda' presented an emergent, somewhat mixed picture with some evidence of excellent activity linked to curriculum innovation and signs of some strong activity.

He had noted that the full engagement of the University and its staff with key Higher Education bodies positioned the University well in regard to the HEFCE *Revised Operating Model for Quality Assessment* and the Teaching Excellence Framework.

The Committee noted that priorities would be reviewed as the Strategy was considered further, in light of the new Strategic Plan and ongoing development of the Research and International strategies.

Professor Jędrzejewski commented that the closure of the School of Modern Languages impacted on the University's work on internationalisation and that mechanisms needed to be available to support students in achieving an international experience. Professor McMullan stated that, as the University expanded its international ambitions, it was particularly important to ensure that international students attending the University's campuses had an excellent experience, not just on their courses but more broadly through a vibrant social environment, and that an appropriate institutional infrastructure needed to be put in place to make sustainable the extra-mural activities that individual staff currently offered on a personal basis. It was noted that the Council had recently made a substantial resource available in support of the University's international plans.

16.45 INTERIM REPORT ON THE STRATEGIC PROGRAMME REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT ODCM PROJECT

Professor Ruth Fee gave a presentation on the interim report on the Programme Review and Development pilot in the School of the Built Environment (Paper No LTC/16/10). The Committee had received in April and June 2015 operational proposals and a high-level strategic paper which set out the context for the proposals (mins 15.6 – 7 and 15.41 refer).

It was noted that the project had been stimulated by the need to refocus Faculty and School/Departmental activity on the ongoing student experience, supported by an engaged course team, rather than on the production of a course document every five years. The two strategic and interdependent objectives were to build and/or enhance leadership capacity within and across course teams, so that all team members were motivated to take a strategic and collective approach to course review and development; and to streamline the current revalidation process to ensure that the process of achieving academic rigour and viability of courses also provided a platform for teams to enhance curriculum design and pedagogical dialogue between themselves and key stakeholders.

It was noted that the process had been revised during the span of the pilot on account of the scale of staffing reduction as a result of voluntary severance in the School. The most significant change was the deferral of the close engagement with external panel members until after an initial panel meeting. A final meeting of the panel was to be held when externals would formally have agreed the document changes remotely, and internal panel members would be present to agree the recommendations and conditions of approval for the course provision.

The interim recommendations in the report had been informed by findings from the planning meetings and engagements with the course teams, records from the event and feedback from participants: internal and external panel members, course directors and the Head of School and Associate Head of School, Staff Development and the Academic Office.

The ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction) Motivational Systems Design Model was used to co-facilitate the School in reviewing course performance and designing the future curriculum. The Committee noted that positive comments had been received from the School on the curriculum development process which had facilitated dialogue with stakeholders around Purpose Goals and the creation of a sense of ownership and commitment to the curriculum. It had provided an opportunity for Course Directors to agree collectively their School curriculum and share and develop their innovative pedagogic practice. Dr Keenan confirmed that the School was now adopting a model of continuous curriculum and pedagogic development, which would see more review and change in-year than in the past.

It was, however, recognised that not all schools would require the same level of intervention or support in rethinking their curriculum or pedagogy. The report recommended that the timeline should take account of the particular needs of the school/subject reflecting their current level of engagement in iterative enhancement (Recommendation 2).

Internal panel members had stated that there was a need to think carefully about the optimum size, scope and coherence of the PRD subject clusters/units. The report recommended flexibility around the size of units, taking into account a range of factors (Recommendation 5). While some members felt that there had been robust and strategic discussions at the initial panel meeting, another considered that more in-depth analysis was missing.

Although some external panel members were pleased with the process, they had drawn attention to the extensive documentation in such a large unit and the possible benefit of a second day for the meeting to give more time for deeper discussion. It was noted that there could be further streamlining (Recommendation 7). The use of SharePoint had been positively received.

The Committee noted that the School considered the engagements with the external subject experts after the initial meeting to have been very valuable and productive, resulting in further enhancements to the curriculum. The Chair reported that the level of involvement of externals before, during and after the meeting had been variable and there was a need to ensure that externals actively engage through each stage. She advised that it was vital that the process was rigorous and robust in terms of standards assurance and stressed the importance of evidence of

the key points identified during the engagements being available to the final panel meeting, together with how and where these have been addressed in the revised submission.

Professor Jędrzejewski questioned whether the apparent large amount of work involved might interfere with the ongoing work of a school, particularly if it were to coincide with significant activity such as a REF submission.

The Committee noted the report's nine recommendations, which identified interim conclusions about processes, and proposed further testing in 2016/17 taking account of the findings of this iteration.

It was noted that in addition to those recommendations identified above (Recommendations 2, 5, 7), the recommendations highlighted the need for an integrated team approach to curriculum development to include the Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice (CHERP) and the Office for Digital Learning (ODL) (Recommendation 3) and potential greater involvement of students as co-creators of curriculum (Recommendation 9). In addition, automated intelligence-gathering from existing University systems and datasets could support curriculum design and review (Recommendation 4). The timeline for future events should aim to maximise the engagement of external panel members (Recommendation 6) and training for panel chairs should be introduced (Recommendation 8).

The Chair considered that it would be valuable for each of the new Faculties to participate in the next phase of the pilot.

AGREED that:

- i) Professor Fee, Ms Cochrane, Dr Stockdale, Professor Griffiths, Dr Keenan, the School and the Students' Union be thanked for their contribution to the pilot;
- ii) the pilot be extended into 2016/17, to include schools/subject areas from each of the other three new Faculties (Recommendation 1);
- iii) Professor Fee convene a task-and-finish group to review all associated administration and paperwork (Recommendation 7) and determine the requirements and timelines of the 2016/17 pilot, learning from experience in the 2015/16 pilot and advising on:
 - a) the developmental aspect (for curriculum and pedagogy), the use of ARCS or other methodologies, the involvement of students, CHERP and ODL;
 - b) standards assurance process including the documentation requirements and the timing of the external engagement;
- iv) a further report be received by the Committee in 2016/17, with a view to roll-out from 2017/18.

16.46 COURSE APPROVAL SUB-COMMITTEE

Professor McAlister presented the report from the meeting held on 18 May 2016 (Paper No LTC/16/11).

16.47 Course Approval (Item 1)

The Committee endorsed recommendations for approval and re-approval and noted revisions and the introduction of credit-bearing short courses approved by faculties and course withdrawals.

AGREED that:

- i) course provision be approved and re-approved as set out in Appendix 1;
- ii) the Chair be authorised to take action on behalf of the Committee in respect of the approval of the recommendations from nine late evaluation and revalidation events for which reports have yet to be received;
- iii) one-year extensions to periods of approval to include 2017/18 intake be approved for the following provision:

BDes Hons Product and Furniture Design (Revalidation Unit 2K);

BSc Hons Architecture, Master of Architecture, BSc Hons Architectural Technology and Management (Revalidation Unit 2G);

BSc Hons Occupational Therapy, BSc Hons Physiotherapy, BSc Hons Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging, BSc Hons Radiotherapy and Oncology, BSc Hons Speech and Language Therapy (Revalidation Unit 28M);

Certificate in Community Youth Studies, BSc Hons Community Development, BSc Hons Community Youth Work, PgDip/MSc Community Youth Work, Certificate in Restorative Practices, PgDip/MSc in Restorative Practices (Revalidation Unit 26A);

CertHE Community Development (College Network) (Revalidation Unit 28B);

- iv) the title change for FdSc Agriculture and Technology (previously Agriculture and Rural Studies) at CAFRE be approved.

16.48 Annual Report on Evaluation and Subject Revalidation Activity: 2015/16 (Item 4)

The Chair asked faculties to ensure that the recommendations in the 2015/16 annual report were taken into account particularly by those course/subject teams' preparing for evaluation/revalidation in 2016/17. It was noted that the summary of themes arising from events had been provided to Faculty Learning and Teaching Co-ordinators for wider dissemination (recommendation ix).

The Committee noted that the planned reduction in the number of Pro-Vice-Chancellors from five to three from the next academic year would mean that the

new Associate Deans, Deans and Heads of School would be expected to take on a greater share of chairing events. The intention was that evaluation/revalidation events should normally be chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Associate Deans and exceptionally, where they were not available, by Deans or Heads of School. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the other two Pro-Vice-Chancellors would not be asked to chair events. The Chair clarified that until the new appointees were in post existing arrangements would apply.

AGREED: that the recommendations relating to the organisation and management of evaluation and revalidation in 2016/17 be endorsed.

16.49 SUB-COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYABILITY

Professor McMullan presented the report of meeting held on 18 May 2016 (Paper No LTC/16/12).

16.50 AGCAS/Gradireland Employability Award (Item 1i)

The Committee noted that the Employability and Marketing Department had been awarded the AGCAS/Gradireland Employability Award at the Gradireland Graduate Recruitment Awards ceremony for work on 'Learning Gain' and the 'Employability Journey'.

16.51 Strategic Review of Destinations of Leavers from HE (DLHE) Survey (Item 1 iii)

The Committee noted that a consultation had opened on the strategic review of DLHE. A task group would respond to the HESA survey on behalf of the University by the July deadline.

16.52 Student Employability Skills Working Group (Item 2i)

The Committee noted that a paper reviewing and recommending further actions in support of Personal Development Planning had been received. A workshop on this topic had led to nine recommendations including making greater use of studies advice sessions as a method of recording and encouraging student development and the use of the HEAR as the single end-point to record development. Lack of clarity around PDP as a process and employability as an outcome at both institutional and student levels was highlighted and it was considered that staff and students could benefit from targeted interventions in this regard.

The Committee noted that a low percentage of resource was available to develop and implement the full functionality of existing technology which could support studies advice incorporating PDP/employability.

The Committee noted the success of the Employability Conference held in May with 151 delegates, which had focussed on support in a changing and evolving climate, and featured presentations on Outward Mobility and Learning Gain.

16.53 Work Experience Working Group (Item 2ii)

It was noted that interim results from the annual Work-Based Learning Survey showed that a compulsory one-year placement was adopted in undergraduate degrees by 14% of responding courses and that 42% had indicated that experiential WBL met the 2015 Guiding Principles and no issues had been highlighted. Further initiatives would be taken forward in the next academic year to help course teams and there would be an evaluation of processes.

The video recordings created for the Placement Employer of the Year event had been well received and the finalists documented student placement impact could be a useful promotional resource for faculties.

16.54 Employability Monitoring Working Group (Item 2iii)

The Committee noted that 81% of all full-time undergraduate students identified themselves as being at the 'explore' or 'plan' stage of their Employability Journey, and only 4% reported that they were pursuing their course primarily out of personal interest.

It was noted that a holistic picture and identification of student employability trends could be found only in annual results rather than in considering a single year response in isolation. The results should be discussed alongside Partnership Agreements at the beginning of, and during, each academic year. Datasets and guidance on interpretation would be made available via the Staff Employability portal, within a range of resources and indicators to assist course teams in tracking student engagement with employability.

The Committee noted the University's membership of the HEFCE-funded project to 'Investigate the Potential of Careers Registration to measure Learning Gain'.

16.55 Employers and Entrepreneurship Working Group Item 2iv)

Thirty-two employers were scheduled to attend an engagement event on 22 June.

16.56 Outward Mobility (Item 2v)

A new Activity Working Group had been created and the remit and work schedule had been agreed at the first meeting.

16.57 Strategic Employability Initiative (Life and Health Sciences) (Item 3)

Professor McMullan reported that a pilot investigation and analysis of DLHE statistics within the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences had resulted in a number of recommendations which could help meet and exceed benchmarks for graduate-level employability. He noted that, with the support of Employability and Marketing, course teams had a framework to identify programmes on which to focus resource.

Sub-Committee members considered the student experience to be a potential key for increasing an Ulster student's 'social capital' and that the student experience at

the University should differentiate provision from future Higher Level Apprenticeships.

16.58 Ulster Employability Framework (Item 4)

The Committee noted that a presentation on Employability had been developed and delivered in partnership with Professor Fee to identify frameworks for Pre-entry, Student Experience at Ulster and Post-graduation support. The presentation addressed the development of a definition of employability for staff and an accessible framework which could be applied to a whole School. It also explained how to incorporate studies advice to support employability for each year group.

Ms Honan reported that recent independent research undertaken on behalf of the Students' Union had shown that Ulster students were very career minded, with 36% emphasising that they wanted their studies to enhance their career and employability prospects; 19% indicated that their course of study was related to their career choice and 21% were enthusiastic about the subject. This evidence reinforced the work of the Sub-Committee. The Chair welcomed the research undertaken and suggested that more work might be undertaken together in this regard.

Mr Quigg reported that, in a eSafety workshop at a recent Health and Wellbeing Conference, it was reported that a very high proportion of employers checked the online social media accounts of applicants. Professor McMullan advised that recent discussions about Fitness to Practise had highlighted the importance of care with social media in view of potential damage to professional career prospects.

16.59 DIGITAL LEARNING SUB-COMMITTEE

Professor Murphy presented, on behalf of Professor Hanna, the report from the meeting held on 24 May 2016 (Paper No LTC/16/13).

15.60 Digital Learning Infrastructure (Item 1)

The Committee noted that the migration to a hosted solution with Blackboard Learn was now scheduled for 31 August. It was anticipated that the downtime would be two or three days. A communications campaign would begin six to eight weeks in advance.

The synchronous teaching tool, Blackboard Collaborate, had been well received in a number of pilots and was generating a lot of interest.

The Committee noted that the Digital Learning Statistics Highlight Report showed an encouraging number of assignment submissions being made online with 38,000 through the Blackboard assignment tool and 56,000 through Turnitin to date. While this might represent 40% of the total it was intended to try to gauge this proportion more accurately next year.

There had been over 400 training sessions delivered so far this year. The popularity of 'Designing Flipped Learning' was a positive development, as it reflected the enthusiasm for preparing for change.

It was also noted that module presence in Blackboard was healthy and those without a presence typically used an alternative system, although these were not supported by the Office for Digital Learning (ODL).

16.61 Digital Learning Strategy (Item 2)

The Sub Committee noted that the Infrastructure stage of 2015/16 was now in place and that the Academic Development Prospectus had been launched. The focus for 2016/17 would be on Innovation with themes including the use of mobile technologies in the classroom, multimedia co-creation and paperless dissertations. A call would be made for expressions of interest for involvement in pilots.

16.62 Digital Learning Policy (Item 3)

The Sub-Committee proposed guidelines for the use of Turnitin, the originality checking software which had been available at the University since the early 2000s, and a policy for the electronic management of assessment.

16.63 Draft Guidelines for the Use of Turnitin

The Committee noted that the draft Guidelines were intended to help improve students' understanding of academic writing with the aim of reducing instances of plagiarism and improving student understanding of academic integrity and the expectations for academic writing with a consequent reduction in instances of plagiarism. It was noted that the guidelines were not framed as a policy but explained how the service was used and clarified what staff and students needed to know about it. They reflected current practice. They should be introduced to staff and students as part of their respective inductions. Sub-Committee members would circulate them within Faculties and Schools following approval.

Clarification was sought as to whether there was functionality for students to submit multiple times through Turnitin without this being recorded on the UK repository. Professor Murphy would review the Guidelines to ensure that this possibility was clear.

AGREED: that, subject to a number of minor amendments, the Guidelines be endorsed (finalised version at Appendix 2).

16.64 Draft Electronic Management of Assessment Policy

The Committee considered the draft Electronic Management of Assessment Policy which addressed the online submission of coursework assignments, return of marks and feedback, in accordance with the vision of the Digital Futures Strategy for 100% online management of assessment and feedback where practicable. It was noted that standardisation of practice was attractive to the student body in view of the variability of current arrangements. The policy aimed to streamline processes in the assessment cycle and bring benefits for students and academic and administrative staff, in terms of efficiency, quality of feedback and engagement with students. It was recognised that online submission was not feasible for some types of coursework and consequently academic teams would be allowed to opt out of the policy if a valid case were made.

It was noted that many schools were already accepting all submissions online, and many were also marking and providing feedback online. It was recognised that online marking would be a challenging process for others. The Sub-Committee had also noted that not all academic staff at present had the appropriate hardware/software. Consequently, the Sub-Committee had recommended a staged approach with online submission being achieved in semester 2, 2016/17, online return of marks in the following year and the online return of marks and feedback in 2018/19.

It was noted that the Committee would provide guidance and training to support the transition. Positive examples of practice would help adoption.

The Sub-Committee had also recommended that external examiners use the VLE to review coursework submissions, provisional marks and feedback as part of their moderation duties. An access protocol was in place and the functionality of the supporting technologies allowed samples to be identified. Professor McMahon-Beattie commented on the difficulties she had experienced in this regard as an external at another institution.

AGREED that:

- i) subject to minor amendments, the draft Policy and target dates be approved (finalised version at Appendix 3);
- ii) external examiners be informed, at the time of appointment, of the University's preference for online submission, marking and feedback; they should be asked to review submissions digitally through the VLE when these were available.

16.65 Learning Analytics

The Committee noted that a Learning Analytics licence had been negotiated as part of the DLE procurement process but additional resources would be required to realise fully its benefits. Learning Analytics reports would provide the University with the opportunity to use data about students and their learning activities to help understand and improve educational processes and provide better support. No new data would be collected, but existing datasets would be interpreted and analysed in new ways. A business case was to be submitted to the IT Prioritisation Committee and if the project were approved, a Project Management Board would be formed reporting to the Sub-Committee.

The Committee noted the intention to inform students about the use of their personal data at online enrolment.

16.66 PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

Professor McMahon-Beattie presented the report of the meeting held on 6 April 2016 (Paper No LTC/16/14).

16.67 HLA Level 3 Transition Meeting (Item 1v)

The Committee noted that a meeting had been held between representatives of Student Administration, the Collaborative Courses Forum, Flexible and Continuing Education and DEL to discuss possible interim solutions for students aiming to progress from a level 3 apprenticeship. It was noted that the group proposed that, rather than developing a new interim qualification, the existing Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (COPE), which was recognised by UCAS, would provide prospective students with the required tariff alongside the subject-related level 3 qualification they were undertaking.

16.68 Professional and Continuing Education Planning (Items 1ii and 2)

The Committee noted that information on semester 1 activity had been circulated to Heads of Faculty Administration to assist them in forward planning. It was also noted that, although challenging, the academic plan for enrolments on credit-bearing modules in 2015/16 was expected to be met. At the date of the Sub-Committee meeting there were 794 enrolments on undergraduate framework modules (plan 920) and 155 on postgraduate modules (90). Planning for 2016/17 would commence at the start of the next academic year.

16.69 Professional and Continuing Education Developments (Item 3)

The Committee noted that a working group was being set up to look at a community curriculum and that the current review of committee structures could affect the two sub-committees supported by the Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education.

16.70 Non-Credit-Bearing Activity (Item 5)

It was noted that the Sub-Committee had discussed a paper on financial models for non-credit short courses. A meeting was to take place with the Finance Department to determine an appropriate charging structure for such short courses. This would be considered initially by the Sub-Committee before recommendations were made to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

16.71 **WORKING GROUP ON HIGHER LEVEL SKILLS AND APPRENTICESHIPS (HLAs)**

Professor McMullan presented the report of the Working Group (Paper No LTC/16/15).

The Working Group had been established to take a strategic and co-ordinated approach to HLAs, particularly at levels 6, 7 and 8. It was also to consider any HLA proposals that were developed by University staff. It had been asked to report on the differing operating environments in England and Northern Ireland, the University's current level of engagement across the Faculties, and to make recommendations for the University's future approach, including business engagement, marketing, and internal processes and support mechanisms for Faculties (min 15.147 refers).

The Committee noted that the HLA landscape within Northern Ireland was still in a state of flux and was likely to remain so until the Department for the Economy (DfE) set out detailed guidance at the end of the pilot phase (academic year 2016/17). The working group had proven to be a valuable forum in which to both collect and disseminate information and consequently it had recommended that it should continue during 2016/17 to act as a 'first stop shop' to provide support and guidance in the development of HLAs for both University staff and employers.

To demonstrate leadership in this area, the Working Group recommended that:

- the University should actively engage with the DfE and other education providers to ensure a co-ordinated and efficient HLA development and governance process;
- Faculties engage actively in HLA developments with appropriate employers and also with the established HLA sectoral partnerships;
- the Northern Ireland Skills Barometer, developed by Ulster, be used in a strategic engagement with employers to enable the development of HLAs for specific economic sectors with greatest graduate employee need;
- the University investigate innovative mechanisms for the development and support of HLAs, for example, as a 'primary employer' for the creative technology sector or using its campus locations as regional catalysts;
- the University develop a strategy for the development of appropriate HLAs within its own structures, taking account of the forthcoming apprenticeship levy from April 2017;
- the Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education explore a possible framework model for a professional skills/work-based learning pathway to level 6.

It also recommended that a fast-track programme review process was considered essential to ensure that the University might respond adequately to the needs of employers, and that the University should develop a clear message which articulated to prospective students the merits of pursuing a University-based educational experience relative to that achieved through the HLA route.

The Committee endorsed the recommendations.

AGREED that:

- i) the Working Group remain in place during the pilot phase and take forward the recommendations made;
- ii) the University give recognition to the importance of HLAs in the development and growth of the Northern Ireland economy, perhaps through its emerging Civic Engagement strategy.

16.72 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Professor McAlister presented the annual report on the nomination and appointment of external examiners for 2015/16 (Paper No LTC/16/16).

The Committee noted the number of nominations submitted, the proportion which were late, incomplete or departed from the University's Code of Practice, and the number not approved. 2015/16 had seen an improving situation continue in regard to departures from the Code at 36% in 2015/16 and incomplete nominations (22%). In contrast, the number of late nominations had risen from 25% last year to 34% in 2015/16. This required a more proactive approach by faculties.

The Chair was pleased to note the wide range of institutions from which nominees were drawn in 2015/16. A total of 58 nominations had been made from 42 institutions.

AGREED that:

- i) faculties ensure:
 - the timely submission of external examiner nominations. (The final date for new appointments commencing in academic year 2017/18 is 26 May 2017);
 - that staff responsible for making, processing and checking nominations were aware of the contents of the External Examining Code of Practice and that they be reminded of the importance of providing all necessary information, in particular with respect to 'non-accordance' with the Code.
- ii) progress in 2016/17 be reviewed in June 2017.

VARIATIONS AND DEPARTURES FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

16.73 Civil Engineering Programmes

The Committee received a proposal from the Faculty of Art, Design and the Built Environment to allow the following programmes to continue to depart from the 'exit velocity' principle in order to meet the Joint Board of Moderators (JBM) requirement in regard to final classification of Honours degrees (Paper No LTC/16/17a):

BEng Hons/MEng Hons Civil Engineering
BSc Hons Civil Engineering (Geoinformatics)

The Committee noted that at the January 2016 professional body visit the JBM Panel had confirmed orally their long-standing requirement for a Level 5 contribution. The report of the visit had yet to be received.

The School sought approval for the continuation of the variations to the University's classification regulation as follows:

BEng (Hons) Civil Engineering and BSc (Hons) Civil Engineering (Geoinformatics)

80% level 6

20% level 5

BEng (Hons) Civil Engineering exit award from the MEng Hons

20% Level 7 (30-credit point Dissertation module taken in penultimate year to meet University regulation requiring that at least one module shall normally be assessed by dissertation in the final level of an honours degree programme);

60% Level 6 (90 credits taken in penultimate year);

20% Level 5 (120 credits).

MEng Hons Civil Engineering

100% level 7 – 120 credits (final year) and 30 credits (penultimate year - level 7 dissertation module).

AGREED: that the proposal be endorsed, subject to receipt of evidence of a JBM requirement through its formal report.

16.74 BSc Hons Energy and BEng Hons Architectural Engineering

The Committee at its meeting on 18 June 2014 had approved a variation to include a level 5 contribution for these courses, subject to confirmation of professional body requirement and clarification of the contributing modules (min 14.64 refers). The Committee noted that the Faculty had now confirmed that the professional body did not require the level 5 contribution and the approval was no longer sought.

16.75 BSc Hons Social Work

The Committee at its meeting in April 2015 had referred back two proposed departures from the University's regulatory framework in relation to admission requirements for part-time students and exemptions, for further clarification with the professional and regulatory body and the Northern Ireland Degree in Social Work Partnership (min 15.26 refers). A further paper was received in June 2015 which provided additional information on the regional agreement and a proposed action plan. These had been the subject of ongoing discussion during 2015/16 (min 15.72 refers).

The Committee noted the update provided by the Faculty (Paper No LTC/17/b). The Faculty had decided that the part-time mode would not be offered from September 2016, owing to the low number of successful applicants in previous years. It was noted that the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) had proposed the permanent discontinuation of this mode, as a result of continual difficulty in recruiting viable numbers and the fact that it has failed to widen participation as intended.

NISCC had also provided a statement confirming acceptance in principle of the use of accreditation of prior learning in respect of academic modules completed in the past five years. It was not considered possible to exempt students from practice learning modules because of the very specific standards required by NISCC.

The Committee noted that, consequent upon these developments, the departures were no longer sought.

16.76 PgDip/MSc Physician Associate Studies

The Committee agreed that Chair's action be taken to consider a proposal to be submitted by the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences that the Postgraduate Certificate, Diploma and MSc exit awards for those students who did not pass the clinical competencies use a title of 'Medical Sciences', which differed from that of the main award.

16.77 PRIZES

The Committee received Paper No LTC/16/18 which set out a proposal for one new prize and noted 16 new prizes and four amended prizes which had been approved by Chair's action on behalf of the Committee and Council.

The Committee was pleased to note the introduction of the Martin McKinney Computing Excellence prize.

AGREED: the Arthur J Gallagher Prize be endorsed for approval on behalf of Council by the Pro -Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience).

16.78 DATES OF SEMESTERS 2016/17 – 2021/22

The Committee received Paper No LTC/16/19 Dates of Semester 2016/17 – 2021/22, setting out the proposed dates for 2021/22.

AGREED: that the dates of semesters for 2021/22 be approved as follows:

Introductory period	Monday 13 September 2021 - Friday 17 September 2021
<u>Autumn Semester</u>	Monday 20 September 2021 – Friday 21 January 2022
(Christmas vacation	Monday 13 December 2021 – Monday 3 January 2022)
Examinations begin	Wednesday 5 January 2022
<u>Spring Semester</u>	Monday 24 January 2022 – Friday 27 May 2022
(Easter vacation	Friday 15 April 2022 – Friday 29 April 2022)
(Revision week	Tuesday 3 May 2022 – Friday 6 May 2022)
Examinations begin	Monday 9 May 2022

Summer Semester (intensive) Monday 25 July 2022 – Friday 16 September 2022

Examinations begin Monday 5 September 2022

Supplementary Examinations Wednesday 17 August 2022 – Thursday 25 August 2022

16.79 TERMS OF REFERENCE, MEMBERSHIP AND DATES OF MEETING 2016/17

The Committee noted the University was conducting a review of the committee structure, which would affect future arrangements for the Committee.

Duration 2 hours 50 mins

1 July 2016

AGF/CA/lh

COURSE APPROVAL

FACULTY	COURSE TITLE	MODE		INTAKES	CAMPUS	MAX COHORT SIZE (Partner)	
		FT	PT			FT	PT
Life and Health Sciences	FdSc Health and Social Care (with CertHE exit award) (Network – Colleges)	✓	✓	2016 - 2020	<u>BMC:</u> Millfield campus (FT/PT)	20	60
					<u>NRC:</u> Coleraine (PT), Ballymena (FT/PT), Magherafelt (PT), Newtownabbey (FT/PT)	16	18 18 18
					<u>NWRC:</u> Strand Road (FT/PT)	32	16 [18 from 2018]
					<u>SERC:</u> Lisburn (FT/PT), Newtownards (FT/PT)	16 20	20 16
					<u>SRC:</u> Armagh (PT), Banbridge (FT/PT), Newry (FT/PT)	20 20	18 18 18
					<u>SWC:</u> Dungannon (FT/PT), Enniskillen (FT/PT), Omagh (FT)	16 16 16	12 [14 from 2018] 12 [14 from 2018]

COURSE RE-APPROVAL

FACULTY	REVAL UNIT	COURSE TITLE	MODE		INTAKES	CAMPUS	MAX COHORT SIZE (Partner)	
			FT	PT			FT	PT
Life and Health Sciences	12E	FdSc Agriculture and Technology [previously FdSc Agriculture and Rural Studies] (with CertHE exit award) at CAFRE	✓	✓	2016 - 2020	Greenmount campus	50	10
	22G	BSc Hons Developing Practice in Healthcare (Level 6)		✓	2016 - 2020	JN and Outcentres: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust / Northern Health and Social Care Trust / South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust / Southern Health and Social Care Trust / Western Health and Social Care Trust / Independent sector		
		PgDip/MSc Developing Practice in Healthcare (with PgCert exit award)		✓	2016 - 2020	JN and Outcentres as above		

Ulster University Business School	5B1a	BSc Hons Business Studies (with CertHE and AB exit awards)	✓	✓	2016 – 2020	JN		
		BSc Hons Business Studies (Management and Leadership)		✓	2016 – 2020	JN		
		BSc Hons Business Studies (Levels 5 and 6) (with AB exit award)		✓	2016 - 2020	Outcentres: South West College (Enniskillen campus), Southern Regional College (Newry campus) and Northern Regional College (Ballymena campus)		
	5B3	Certificate in Management Practice		✓	2016 - 2020	JN / Outcentre: Irish Times Training, Dublin		
		CertHE Management Practice (with Certificate in Management Practice exit award)		✓	2016 - 2020	JN		
		Adv Cert in Management Practice		✓	2016 – 2020	JN / Outcentre: CME Group, Belfast		
		Adv Dip in Management Practice (with Adv Cert in Management Practice exit award)		✓	2016 - 2020	JN / Outcentres: Cavan Innovation and Technology Centre, CME Group, Belfast and Irish Times Training, Dublin		

		BSc Hons Management Practice (with AB Management Practice and CertHE Management Practice exit awards)		✓	2016 - 2020	JN / Outcentres: Cavan Innovation and Technology Centre and Irish Times Training, Dublin.		
	5K	MSc Executive Leadership (with PgCert and PgDip exit awards) PgCert Executive Leadership		✓ ✓	2016 – 2020 2016 – 2020	BT / JN / Outcentre: Irish Times Training, Dublin BT / JN / Outcentre: Irish Times Training, Dublin		
	15D	FdSc International Hospitality Management (with CertHE exit award) [previously FdSc Hospitality and Tourism] FdSc International Travel and Tourism Management (with CertHE exit award) [previously FdSc Travel and Tourism Management] FdSc Event Management (with CertHE exit award) [previously FdSc Events Management for the Tourism Industry]	✓	✓	2016 – 2020	BMC (Titanic Quarter campus)	24 on each course	40 on each course
	15G	BSc Hons International Hospitality Management (Level 6)	✓		2016 – 2020 [2 intakes per year – August & January]	HTMi, Switzerland	Up to 70 students annually	

COURSE WITHDRAWALS

FACULTY	COURSE	LOCATION
Art, Design and The Built Environment	MFA Art in Public [Last intake: 2011/12]	BT
Arts	Diploma in German [Last intake: 2015/16] Undergraduate Honours Subject: German (Major/Main/Minor) [Last intake: 2015/16]	CE CE
Computing and Engineering	BSc Hons Computing Systems [Last intake: 2012/13] [NOTE: CA2a) to reinstate this course from 2016 was approved to proceed to planning and evaluation by APSC at its February 2016 meeting]	QAHE
Life and Health Sciences	MSci Hons Environmental Technologies [proposal withdrawn]	CE

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF TURNITIN AT ULSTER UNIVERSITY

Turnitin is originality checking software and has been used to detect potential instances of plagiarism and incorrect referencing at Ulster since the early 2000s. Ulster has an institutional licence for the software, with single sign on from within Blackboard Learn.

The University's primary focus for using the software is to support Ulster's Plagiarism policy¹ which states that: "It is expected that all students are educated in correct academic practice, including writing and referencing, early in their careers at the University and know what is expected of them and understand the meaning of plagiarism and its consequences".

To support this aim - Turnitin is available to all staff and students, through Blackboard Learn integration, and should be used to:

- help improve students understanding of academic writing with the aim of reducing instances of plagiarism.
- improve student understanding of academic integrity.
- support discussions about the academic integrity of a submission.
- aid the detection of plagiarism where an individual student is suspected of plagiarism.

A secondary use of Turnitin, which has and continues to become increasingly popular, is for the Electronic Management of Assessment. Turnitin's Grademark functionality supports online annotation, online marking, reusable comments, audio feedback and digital feedback.

These guidelines set out how Ulster staff use the service and include recommendations to support academic staff and students who use the service.

1. At Ulster University Turnitin is primarily used to encourage students to improve their academic practice.
2. Turnitin is integrated with Blackboard Learn and is available in all modules. Turnitin should be accessed through Blackboard Learn for single sign-on and ease of use.
3. It is acknowledged that there are specialised, subject specific, assignment types which Turnitin cannot check for originality; for example specialist binary file types, graphics, animations, video and non digital artefacts. Ulster staff will therefore apply judgement to decide if Turnitin is appropriate for individual assessments.
4. Ulster staff will be open and transparent when checking students' work. If an originality report is to be generated and reviewed by the academic team, it will be clearly indicated in the Turnitin submission area and module handbook.
5. There may be occasions when it is necessary to generate a Turnitin originality report to assist in the identification of plagiarised work as part of a formal disciplinary process. In these circumstances, academic staff are permitted to submit papers on behalf of the students.
6. Turnitin is not a substitute for academic judgement on student submissions. Text matching indicated by Turnitin should be used as an indicator and a particular percentage value does not

¹ <http://www.ulster.ac.uk/academicsservices/student/plagiarism.pdf>

prove instances of plagiarism. The text matches identified in an Originality Report must be reviewed, and judgement applied, to determine:

- a. sources that can be excluded
- b. proper referencing and citation in accordance with University requirements
- c. common terminology in the discipline
- d. the nature of the submission

7. Turnitin will be made available to students, prior to final submission, permitting multiple submissions to check their assignments throughout their course of study. A separate Turnitin submission box (not submitted to the UK repository) should be available for this purpose.
8. Turnitin matches against its database material, this is not guaranteed to identify all instances of potentially plagiarised text.
9. All students should be advised that their work may be made available to third parties (such as Turnitin) for business workflows such as external examining, quality assurance and originality checking.
10. Academic staff should bulk download and back up submissions locally and once marked bulk download and back up any annotated submissions.
11. There may be occasions, beyond Ulster's control, when Turnitin may be unavailable due to technical reasons. Downtime is rare and normally short in duration. As marking is often a time critical process, it is advised that local backups of your assignments are created for business continuity purposes.
12. If Turnitin is unavailable during submission deadlines, assignment extensions will be permitted until the service is restored. Turnitin settings should be amended to facilitate later submission or a separate submission box can be set up to accept late submissions.
13. The Office for Digital Learning will endeavour to communicate downtime through available channels – all student emails, Blackboard announcements and Twitter. Academic staff are encouraged to use module specific communication channels to notify students of the downtime.
14. If Turnitin is unavailable and you need an alternative submission method there are other options available:
 - a. Blackboard Assignment tool
 - b. Paper submission
 - c. Email submission
15. If Turnitin is unavailable and you need to mark assignments offline, you have three options
 - a. Use the iPad app – the Turnitin iPad app stores copies of assignments locally and allows you to mark offline. Marks and feedback will be transferred to Turnitin when the system is restored. You should sync assignments to the app as soon as the submission deadline has passed.
 - b. If you have prepared in advance and downloaded all submissions locally you can
 - i. mark assignments offline and record marks locally for transfer to Turnitin when service is restored. This process is manual and will be labour intensive.
 - ii. Use offline annotation tools such as Adobe Acrobat Reader, Word etc – again this process is manual and will be labour intensive.

ELECTRONIC MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT POLICY

Introduction

The Digital Futures strategy (2015-2018) describes a vision for 100% online management of assessment and feedback, where practical. The Strategy identifies the need for an Online Assessment and Feedback Policy to support this ambition.

The Digital Learning Sub Committee has recommended a staged approach to the implementation of Electronic Management of Assessment that is articulated in this policy.

It is recognised that there will be real, and perceived, challenges with realising the ambition of the Digital Futures strategy. Work undertaken by the VLE Futures Working Group, eLearning Course Directors' Forum and Digital Learning Sub Committee has identified the following challenges:

- Limitations with supported technologies (e.g. second marking, anonymous marking, group assignments and moderation workflows).
- Reliability of supported technologies (e.g. Turnitin service disruption).
- Staff Resistance (e.g. fear of change, anecdotal evidence of poor quality experience with some technology, lack of trust in supported technologies, perception that online marking is time-consuming and difficult).
- Health and Safety issues (e.g. eye strain, repetitive strain injury).

The strategy must therefore be underpinned by suitable support and guidance to help academic teams make the transition to fully online management of assessment. Following acceptance of the policy, supporting guidance will be made available through the Academic Development section of the Office for Digital Learning website. The Office for Digital Learning will also provide training to support the implementation of the policy.

Context

Available data within Blackboard shows that online assessment and feedback is well used at Ulster with approximately 100,000 electronic submissions per academic year, however practice is not standardised across Programmes, Schools and Faculties. The electronic management of assessment streamlines the assessment cycle for students, academic staff and administrators in terms of efficiency and allows for rich feedback and direct engagement with the students. Providing timely, clear, legible and meaningful feedback to students in a consistent manner is key to supporting and helping students feed forward as they progress through their studies.

Scope

This policy covers the three core elements of Electronic Management of Assessment.

1. **Online Submission:** the process whereby a student submits work online for storage and retrieval for marking, feedback and review. This can include originality checking.
2. **Online Return of Marks:** the process whereby academic and teaching staff provide online marks to students.
3. **Online Return of Marks and Feedback:** the process whereby students access and view their marks and feedback online.

This policy should be read in conjunction with The Ulster Assessment Handbook (<http://www.ulster.ac.uk/academicoffice/download/Handbooks/Assessment%20Handbook.pdf>) and principles for Assessment and Feedback for Learning (http://ee.ulster.ac.uk/assessment_and_feedback/)

Aims

- To standardise online assessment and feedback processes and practices at Ulster.
- To provide students with the means to submit their assessments online.
- To provide students with online marks and feedback.
- To provide staff with the means to mark online, digitally annotate assessments and provide digital feedback.
- To provide structured processes for managing assignment workflows such as External Examiner access.
- To provide a foundation for improving other business workflows such as the uploading of assessment marks to Banner.

Online Submission

1. To ensure a consistent experience for students, online submission will be the expected norm from academic year 2016/17.
2. There are practical reasons why online submission may not be suitable and exceptions will be permitted, for example, submission of creative coursework, drawings, performances, some types of portfolios, group work, presentations and practicals, large documentation (larger than 20MB) etc. Exceptions will be considered through the Digital Learning Sub Committee and requests should be submitted, via email, to elearning@ulster.ac.uk. If agreed, alternative arrangements can be made for submission. In these instances academic teams should use the Grade Centre within Blackboard to return student marks and any feedback.
3. Academic staff should set up assignment submission points within their modules in Blackboard Learn. These should be contained within a clearly defined content area within the Blackboard Module area that is consistently named. Ulster's Blackboard template uses the term 'Assessment' and it is recommended that the naming convention is used.
4. Clear instructions should be made available alongside the submission box, providing information about the assignment expectations and how to contact the academic team with any queries.
5. There are three supported technologies that can be used for online assignment submission, all integrated within Blackboard Learn.
 - Turnitin
 - Blackboard Assignment,
 - Share Stream Media assignment (video submissions).
6. Each tool has unique characteristics and supports different assessment types, for example; group work, anonymous marking, peer assessment. If your assessment design requires specific functionality, the Office for Digital Learning can provide guidance to help select the most appropriate technology.
7. For extenuating circumstances the Office for Digital Learning recommends using a separate submission box.

Online Return of Marks

8. To ensure a consistent experience for students, all marks should be made available to students through Blackboard Learn in academic year 2017/18.
9. Marks should be returned to all students on the same date, and the relevant Grade Centre column should be hidden until all marks are populated.

Online Return of Marks and Feedback

10. To ensure a consistent experience for students, marks and feedback should be made available online from academic year 2018/19.
11. There are three supported technologies which can be used for providing feedback digitally:
 - Turnitin Grade Mark / Turnitin App
 - Blackboard Assignment inline viewer / Grader App
 - Blackboard Grade Centre (by uploading Word/PDF documents).