

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held on 8 December 2015 by video-conference

PRESENT

Professor D A McAlister (Chair), Professor A Adair, Dr M Black, Ms E Bonner, Professor P Hanna, Professor D Heenan, Ms A Honan, Professor F Lyons, Mr L McCurry, Mr D McGivern, Professor A McKillop, Professor M McKinney, Dr T McLernon, Professor U McMahan-Beattie, Professor G McMullan, Dr A Melvin, Professor R J Millar, Professor I Montgomery, Professor B Murphy, Mr M Quigg

APOLOGIES

Dr M Boyd, Professor P Carmichael, Miss C Cochrane, Professor C Curran, Professor D Hazlett, Professor J Jędrzekewski, Professor L Maguire, Professor N McClenaghan, Professor M McHugh, Professor H McKenna, Dr R Moreland, Professor P Nixon, Mrs U Quinn

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs C G Avery, Mr A G Faulkner, Mrs A Scanlon (for mins 15.148 – 15.149)

UNRESERVED

15.114 MINUTES

The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2015 were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

15.115 Grade Point Average (Min 15.80)

The Chair reported that SET at its meeting the previous day had considered a strategic paper on the introduction of a Grade Point Average (GPA) scheme and had agreed in principle that the University should move to adopting the GPA scale to run alongside the Honours classification scheme (dual-running) as recommended by the HEA. A paper setting out the implications including regulatory and resource matters and the timeframe would be considered by the Committee at its March meeting.

15.116 Research Integrity Course (Min 15.84)

Mr McGivern reported that he had met with Research Governance to progress the recognition of the Research Integrity course as a University-wide activity within the EDGE Award.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

15.117 Recommendations to Senate

The Chair reported that Senate at its November meeting had approved the following recommendations from the June meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee:

Introduction of Commendation Award in Postgraduate Courses (min 15.43);

Removal of optional Viva Voce Examinations (min 15.67);

New arrangements for electronic deposit of Distinction-Level Master's Dissertations in the University Library (min 15.68).

Faculties should ensure that course regulations and student handbooks were updated as appropriate.

15.118 Honorary Professorship

The Chair reported that Senate, at its November meeting, had awarded an Honorary Professorship to Dr Murphy in recognition of his academic distinctions in Learning and Teaching and had agreed that he should use the title. The Committee extended its congratulations to Professor Murphy.

15.119 Appointment of Director of Combined Studies: Jordanstown

The Committee noted that Dr Wendy Saunderson (School of Criminology, Politics and Social Policy) had taken on the role of Director of Combined Studies for the Jordanstown campus.

The Committee extended its thanks to the outgoing Director, Dr Catrin Rhys (School of Communication), for her work and to Dr Saunderson for taking on this role.

15.120 QAA Subject Benchmark Statements

The Committee noted that the QAA had published new subject benchmark statements for Biosciences and Biomedical Sciences.

PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODY ACCREDITATION

15.121 MA Journalism

The Committee received the accreditation report from the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) and the Faculty's response (Paper No LTC/15/31a). Although the report recommended accreditation for a further two years (to May 2017), accreditation had been given for one year because of the move to new facilities in September 2015 which the Council intended to visit in early 2016 and their wish to monitor the results of the 2014/15 cohort in reporting.

As the response did not clearly identify the actions taken to address the three conditions set, the Academic Office had asked the Head of School to provide an additional statement. The Committee noted that:

- i) the system of shorthand instruction and timetable had changed to address some of the student concerns. However, given cutbacks in part-time hours and other staff resources it was not possible to run it across four days for an hour;
- ii) two staff had completed the NCTJ Mobile Journalism course in the past eight weeks and £250,000 had been invested in new TV and newsroom equipment to support mobile journalism.
- iii) the marks for reporting in May 2015 had improved significantly to one of the best rates in the UK.

The Committee was satisfied with the additional information and congratulated the course team on the successful re-accreditation of the programme.

15.122 Master of Pharmacy (Hons)

The Committee received the accreditation report of the General Pharmaceutical Council and the Faculty response (Paper No LTC/15/31b). It was noted that the programme was re-accredited for six years with no conditions or recommendations. Congratulations were extended to the course team on this excellent achievement.

15.123 SUB-COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYABILITY

Professor McMullan presented the report from the meeting held on 17 November 2015 (Paper No LTC/15/32).

15.124 International Student Employability and Student Mobility (Item 1i)

The Committee noted the University's involvement in a benchmarking project with ten other institutions from Australia, Canada and UK which aimed to explore and compare external strategic relationships and partnerships with industry. The significance of internships, placement and work-based learning for international student retention would be considered. The Project would host a Peer Review Workshop to consider aspects of good practice for sharing and areas for improvement, and a Global Think Tank Conference on key challenges, good practice and areas for collaboration in international student employability and mobility. The Conference report would be received by the Sub-Committee.

15.125 Radox APEX Programme (Item 1ii)

The Committee noted that a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed between the University and Radox Laboratories which would provide 50 summer internships through the APEX programme. Recruitment of first year students across the three faculties involved was ongoing.

15.126 Workforce Development Seminar (Item 1iii)

This event held on 13 November 2015 involving policy makers, employers and educators had been very successful in demonstrating the benefits and impact of employer/university collaborations. The follow-through by employers was encouraging.

15.127 Student Employability Skills Working Group (Item 2i)

It was noted that the staff and student questionnaires within the EDORT tool had been updated. Faculties were expected to use this tool in preparation for revalidation and the Programme Review and Development pilot. It had been suggested that employers could be invited to participate in the process and that EDORT should be included in delivery of change management training by Staff Development.

An Employability Partnership Agreement had been negotiated between the Students' Union and Employability and Marketing which identified agreed priority activities such as increased student participation with the EDGE Award and a joint 'Enterprise and Work Experience Week' scheduled for 22 – 26 February 2016.

The annual Employability Conference would take place on 4 May 2016.

15.128 Work Experience Working Group (Item 2ii)

It was noted that Deans had confirmed that all Honours degrees had developed models to meet the requirement for compulsory work-based learning. The Working Group would be seeking examples of good practice to share through the new Employability channel in the Portal.

The Placement Employer of the Year competition had been launched and the deadline for nominations was 1 February 2016, with the ceremony to be held on 5 May.

The Committee welcomed the provision by Santander of bursary support for 45 three-month internships for recent graduates which would assist them in gaining relevant employment. Santander would also be funding seven undergraduate summer internships in 2016.

15.129 Employability Monitoring Working Group (Item 2iii)

The report on the analysis of the first student Employability Journey survey had been positively received. It was noted that the survey presentation would be re-evaluated during semester 2 and that further guidance would be developed on its use in identifying areas for intervention and course development.

Recommendations for the University DLHE exercise had been received by SET and a report provided to faculties.

15.130 Employers and Entrepreneurship Working Group (Item 2iv)

It was noted that Mr McGivern was supporting the Chair of the Working Group in the strategy to develop effective relationships with employers which linked activity with delivery across the University. A meeting had taken place to discuss plans for a unified and co-ordinated approach to employer engagement.

15.131 Employability Events (Item 3)

It was noted that, as a pilot, this year's Graduate Recruitment and Work Placement Fair Week had been held at the Jordanstown campus only. The number of organisations participating had increased to 150 with over 1700 students attending. It was noted that many employers were not in a position to attend multiple events at all campuses and buses had been provided to transport students from other campuses.

Although the Fair had been promoted to students across all campuses, concern was expressed by Mr Quigg about the absence of such an event at other campuses and he asked whether its location might rotate in future. Mr McGivern advised that a series of specialist events on all campuses would take place this year and that a review of the full programme would be undertaken. He agreed to provide Mr Quigg with a breakdown, by home campus, of student attendance at the Fair.

Professor Heenan suggested that consideration be given to providing opportunities through Skype and Twitter for those not in a position physically to attend the Fair.

15.132 DIGITAL LEARNING SUB-COMMITTEE

Professor Hanna presented a report from the meeting held on 24 November 2015 (Paper No LTC/15/33).

15.133 Digital Classroom (Item 1)

The Committee noted that the JISC 'Digital Classroom' active learning roadshow was running at the Belfast campus until 11 December and that JISC was very pleased with the level of engagement. Professor McAlister reported that the University planned to purchase the 'Digital Classroom' for use as a training facility for classrooms where learning and teaching were effectively supported by technology, furniture and design.

Professor Hanna welcomed this development but advised that an appropriate staff resource would be needed.

15.134 Timetabling for GBD (Item 2)

Professor Hanna reported that the Head of Planning and Development and the Timetabling Officer had made a presentation on room usage and timetabling, with particular reference to the Belfast campus development and the shift in teaching and learning practice. It was noted that the survey of general teaching rooms conducted on the Jordanstown campus in week 3 identified that central teaching rooms had a utilisation level of 28% (HEFCE norm - 35%), which was a product of

the average of 62% of rooms being used and having an average occupational level of 45%, with variable levels of occupancy across the week.

It was noted that support for active learning teaching spaces was a priority and the new flexible spaces were proving popular. A more strategic approach to timetabling was recommended, which would help address known issues and inefficiencies and it was noted that the Physical Resources Department would welcome more strategic conversations with schools/faculties in order to achieve more even distribution of teaching throughout the week, a better experience for students and staff, a more targeted and responsive approach to supporting student achievement, as well as more efficient use of an expensive resource.

The Sub-Committee agreed that usage data would be reported through deans and onto heads of school to ensure a strategic approach.

The Sub-Committee also agreed that the Academic Space and Technologies Advisory Group should develop timetabling principles to guide schools. The Chair asked that ASTAG take account of the existing timetabling principles drawn up by Professor McKinney's Working Group in 2011 and confirmed in June 2013.

15.135 Academic Spaces and Technologies Advisory Group (ASTAG) (Item 3)

It was noted that the Academic Spaces and Technologies Executive Group would be constituted on an ad hoc basis for final academic approval of technical and other specifications prior to contractual commitment.

15.136 Digital Learning Infrastructure (Item 4)

Professor Hanna reported that the procurement of the new Digital Learning Environment (DLE) had again stalled due to the higher priority of the Identity and Access Management Project. Committee members considered that the completion of the tender process and migration to a hosted environment by July 2016 was now extremely challenging, which would have serious implications for faculty/school business continuity.

Professor Millar expressed concern about the capacity of ISD to support more than one project at a time, as DLE was a core business project and there were other strategically important projects which also needed to be undertaken.

It was noted that the level of risk in the current project plan was unknown until the preferred supplier was identified. A new VLE supplier would involve greater management of risk. The Committee would receive risk assessments in due course.

AGREED: that this matter be raised as a matter of urgency with the Chief Finance and Information Officer.

15.137 Synchronous Teaching Tool

Blackboard Collaborate had now been installed on the development server and would be deployed after testing. The Committee noted that initial implementation

would focus on users with identified business needs and fully online courses. A selective call would be used for the second stage of roll-out.

15.138 Digital Learning Statistics for Semester One 2015/16

The Committee noted that the numerical drop in page views was a result of changes in the way in which data were recorded. Actual views had increased. The Sub-Committee had agreed that validated courses in partner institutions (which were not supported by the University's VLE) should be removed from the Programme Support Area usage data, as they skewed these statistics, and information on Blackboard module usage, including school breakdown, should be provided to deans.

15.139 Digital Learning Strategy (Item 5)

It was noted that the Digital Futures Strategy would be formally launched in December.

Digital Learning Policy (Item 6)

15.140 Social Media

Professor Hanna reported that the use of social media in teaching and learning had been discussed in light of a growth in requests for support from staff and potential tension between its effective use for teaching (in line with national guidance) and corporate expectations for the University brand. It was noted that ASTAG would seek Faculty views to inform guidelines and Corporate Communications would be involved in discussions. Recommendations would be made to a future meeting of the Committee. The Sub-Committee had also agreed that the Students' Union should develop student guidelines on the use of social media for teaching and learning.

It was noted that the University's Social Media Policy gave advice and guidance on the appropriate use of social media, and the potential consequences of misuse.

15.141 VLE Data Retention and User Access

It was noted that the migration to a hosted and managed service required a clear policy on data retention. Following consultation with the VLE Futures Working Group and eLearning Course Directors' Forum, five recommendations had been made regarding duration of student and staff access and archiving. Faculties would be asked to comment on the proposals.

15.142 PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

Professor McMahon-Beattie presented the report from the meeting held on 3 November 2015 (Paper No LTC/15/34).

15.143 Pricing Issues across Flexible Frameworks (Item 1)

The Committee noted that the Finance system did not support identification of premium fees for students who were taking short course modules within the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development Framework which were also offered in Master's degrees and taken by international students. The current solution was to create a new CRN version of the module which carried the premium fee for affected programmes to enable the correct charge to be made. This required manual intervention if the module was being supported through Blackboard Learn.

Professor Murphy would include this issue in the business of the pricing working group of the Student Recruitment and Marketing Sub-Committee.

15.144 Professional and Continuing Education Planning Working Group (Item 5)

It was noted that a draft PCE plan for each school had been developed for the 2015/16 academic year in the context of the faculty's strategic direction but in-year funding cuts and the current institutional review had impacted on activity. While non-MaSN provision and associated income generation remained a key priority for all schools, it was acknowledged that this was a challenging time and provision would be affected by staffing reductions.

The Committee noted that the Sub-Committee had endorsed five recommendations from the Working Group for the future planning process.

15.145 Flexible Frameworks (Item 6)

The Committee noted the year-on-year growth in both frameworks. In the undergraduate framework there were 1526 module enrolments in 2014/15 across 63 modules (1364 students) equating to 101.5 FTE (12.8 FTE increase from 2013/14) and 197 enrolments on the postgraduate framework (214% increase). Further details were included in the 2014/15 annual reports (Papers LTC 15/35a and b)) (mins 15.148 – 149 refer).

Information would be provided in the form of an infographic three times a year at the end of each semester for consideration by the appropriate Faculty committee.

15.146 Non-Credit Short Courses Pilot (Item 7)

Professor McMahon-Beattie reported that during the pilot period from April 2014 just over £100,700 had been receipted for non-credit bearing short courses. The Committee noted that 22% of this was invoiced manually, with a high administrative resource cost. In addition, as non-credit short course students were not registered in the Student Record System, manual intervention was required to ensure that they had access to the necessary systems and/or facilities for their course. The Committee noted that these problems had an adverse effect on the external perception of the University as a professional organisation and on the University's ability to meet academic planning targets for this non-regulated activity.

It was noted that in line with an Internal Audit recommendation it was proposed to introduce sign-off at Faculty level for non-credit bearing short course proposals and

their financial plans. This would also ensure that reputational risk was managed and there was no adverse impact on credit-bearing provision.

The Committee considered recommendations that:

- a) the short courses pilot be brought to an end;
- b) a financial model be developed with the support of Finance to ensure appropriate identification of costs and transparency of income reporting for this activity;
- c) staff resources to support growth be identified and employed in line with expected income targets taking account of current manual interventions;
- d) a quality assurance process including sign-off at Faculty level be established;
- e) short course participants be given an Ulster identity to enable access to campus and other resources.

AGREED that:

- i) the recommendations be endorsed;
- ii) the problems associated with financial and other systems be referred to the Chief Finance and Information Officer for consideration with a request that finance matters be included as part of the current review of financial models. A response should be received by the Committee at its March 2016 meeting.

15.147 Higher Level Skills and Apprenticeships (Item 8)

The Committee noted the success of the Workforce Development event hosted by the Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education in November. It had highlighted the University's partnership approach with business and the FE colleges. The Committee noted that the colleges were well represented at levels 4 and 5 (Foundation degree) and that, while employers appeared satisfied with part-time degree and postgraduate provision, it would be important for the University to be involved in any development at the higher levels, rather than to let this pass to the colleges by default. The Sub-Committee had recommended that a University-level working group should be established to take a strategic and co-ordinated approach to higher level apprenticeships, particularly at levels 6, 7 and 8.

AGREED that:

- i) a working group be established to have strategic oversight of Higher Level Apprenticeship developments and to consider any HLA proposals;
- ii) members be invited to make suggestions for membership of the group.

UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS 2014/15

15.148 Certificate of Personal and Professional Development

Mrs Scanlon presented the annual review report of the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development (Paper No LTC/15/35a).

The Committee noted that in 2014/15 there were 80 live modules available with 63 of these open to the part-time external market. The undergraduate framework had recruited 33% of the year's new undergraduate intake (1364 of 4121 headcount). The enrolments had generated £162,905 in non-MaSN fee income.

PCE Plans had been introduced in 2014/15 in collaboration with faculties and the consequent planned engagements and explorations for 2015/16 were identified in the paper. There had already been 478 enrolments in 2015/16.

The Committee noted that in the First Impression Survey all respondents felt supported and that their knowledge had increased and 97% has indicated that they would recommend part-time study at the University.

15.149 Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development

Mrs Scanlon presented the annual review of the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development (Paper No LTC/15/35b).

The Committee noted that 2014/15 had been the first year of full operation following the pilot and that there had been 197 enrolments compared to a planned number of 80. This equated to 26.8 FTEs which had made a £123,836 contribution to the standard resource (0.15%) with £96,516 in additional fee income. There had already been 131 enrolments in 2015/16 which exceeded the target.

Mrs Scanlon reported that 92% of the 2014/15 students were in employment and 66% were alumni. Although no students had achieved the full 60 credits for an award, some students should achieve this in 2015/16.

The Professional and Continuing Education Sub-Committee had been asked to explore possible progression routes beyond Postgraduate Certificate to a Postgraduate Diploma (or possibly Master's programme), for which there was considered to be a demand.

The Committee noted the problem with setting a premium short-course fee where the module was part of a course with overseas students (see also min 15.143). It was noted that the Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education was also liaising with the Finance Department to develop a fees costing model for new short courses to measure potential fee income against expected expenditure which would include full direct costs. This would support an accurate financial analysis of viability.

The Committee noted three recommendations that:

- i) an appropriate financial model be devised to return short-course income (less overheads) directly to schools/departments rather than through the Faculty Financial Statements;
- ii) an exploration of progression routes be undertaken by the Sub-Committee;
- iii) consultation continue with ISD to progress the inclusion of short courses in the main online prospectus.

The Chair welcomed the growth in activity and future plans and recognised the potential of the framework. It was noted that the Centre had reached capacity for manual intervention and further growth was contingent on IT systems to support a more professional and efficient interface with customers.

While direct return of income to schools was an option, Professor McAlister noted that there may be other ways to provide incentives for faculties and individual staff. In addition, a sound business case and evidence of demand to support extension to postgraduate diploma would be needed.

With these caveats, the Committee supported the recommendations.

15.150 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS 2014/15

Professor McAlister presented the annual overview report, identifying general issues and highlighting specific comments about particular courses in reports for the 2014/15 academic year (Paper No LTC/15/36).

The Committee noted that 357 reports had been received to date. They confirmed that standards were appropriate. Many commended specific aspects of programmes but in a few cases critical comments were made. Course/subject committees were expected to take immediate action to address concerns and report these actions on a timely basis to the external examiner. Faculties were reminded of the requirement to ensure that all reports and the course/subject team's response were provided on the Course Support Area (with names redacted) and discussed with the student body. With reference to course closures, she said that it was important to ensure that such courses continued to meet the University's standards, particularly in regard to assessment and moderation, and that the quality of the student experience was maintained.

15.151 Participation in the Moderation Process (4)

The vast majority of external examiners expressed satisfaction with their involvement in the moderation process with a number describing the conduct of the Board of Examiners as exemplary. Most praised course/subject directors and faculty administrative staff on the way in which documentation had been supplied. No concerns were raised about late appointment.

It was noted that most issues related to either a lack of timeliness in the provision of materials or that these were incomplete.

15.152 Content and Structure (5)

There was almost universal confirmation that the content and structure of programmes were coherent and appropriate to the level, award, subject area and the particular aims of the course/subject. Many examiners identified clear evidence of research or scholarship informing the curriculum and pedagogy.

15.153 Assessment (6)

External examiners were generally satisfied with assessment standards and their reports provided evidence of good use of assessment criteria and wide range of methods. They commented favourably on the high quality of feedback provided to students and also the provision of formative feedback. There was a small number of negative comments regarding variability in feedback, with inconsistency in quality, detail, timeliness and the 'feed-forward' approach.

The Chair was pleased to note that the number of complaints raised by students with externals in relation to the assessment of group work had greatly reduced.

Some examiners had encouraged the use of Turnitin and the online submission of coursework. The absence of anonymous marking had been commented on in a number of cases. It was noted that the University encouraged this where appropriate and practicable. Professor McAlister advised members that the Students' Union had also recently raised this matter with her and in the University and Students' Union Forum and she had written to deans about it. It was noted that the Digital Futures Strategy and the use of technology for the digital submission and assessment of coursework would help make practicable the anonymous marking of coursework.

15.154 Marking Standards (7)

Generally marking standards were considered to be appropriate with a number praising standards as 'high quality' and 'exemplary'. It was disappointing that some concerns recurred from previous years but these were not necessarily in the same programmes. It was noted that the need to improve consistency in the depth of feedback provided was a matter which was raised for a number of courses.

15.155 Quality of Candidates' Work, Student Learning and Comparability (8)

Generally the quality of candidates' work was regarded favourably. The most significant concerns remained poor referencing skills, the use of internet sources and academic skills.

Concerns had been raised with regard to staff resources in a number of programmes. The Chair reminded deans of the importance of keeping resources under review in light of current cutbacks and the withdrawal of some courses/subjects.

A small number of externals had suggested that level 5 should contribute to degree classification in the courses which they examined, with two suggesting this as a way to reduce the high number of firsts awarded. Professor McAlister reminded

members of the diversity of approaches to classification in the sector, the University's exit velocity principle and the reasons for it, and the recently adopted KPI for the University to reach the sector average of 70% for upper second class and first class awards. She also advised that the implementation of a GPA scale alongside Honours classification would allow other years of a programme to contribute to the summary result.

AGREED that:

- i) Faculties be congratulated on the generally high standards evidenced by the reports and be asked to ensure that substantive issues were promptly addressed by the relevant course/subject teams, be monitored through the course/subject management process, and that external examiners were informed of the actions taken;
- ii) Faculties be mindful of the general points of concern highlighted in the report and continue to work to achieve consistent application of best practice;
- iii) Faculties might request the detailed supporting analysis which informed the overview report from the Academic Office if they would find this useful for their oversight of courses in annual monitoring.

COMBINED STUDIES PROGRAMME

15.156 Chief External Examiners Reports 2014/15

Mr McCurry presented the annual reports from the Chief External Examiners for the Coleraine, Jordanstown and Magee campuses and the responses from each campus Co-ordinating Group (Paper No LTC/15/37a).

The Committee noted that all three reports were very positive and that satisfactory responses had been provided.

15.157 Annual Report on the Operation and Management of Combined Subjects in 2014/15

Mr McCurry presented the 2014/15 annual report from the three Campus Co-ordinating Groups (Paper No LTC/15/37b). It was noted that the total number of enrolments across all campuses was 1537 (1455 in 2013/14). The groups continued to address any operational matters related to their campuses and some rationalisation had taken place.

The Committee noted that in 2015/16 at Coleraine and Magee there would be some disruption as subjects/courses were discontinued or moved. The campus co-ordinating groups intended to work to ensure issues were addressed and would develop new strategies and combinations in response to recent developments.

The Committee noted that Professor Millar was currently undertaking a review of modules with low enrolments. Although the majority of modules in specific subject combinations contributed to other provision, the campus co-ordinating groups should be mindful of enrolments in light of this review. Professor McAlister asked

that the campus co-ordinating groups be made aware of any modules which might be affected at an early stage so that the implications for existing subjects and combinations could be considered promptly.

15.158 CertHE and AB Exit Awards for Business (Major) with Psychology (Minor)

The Committee noted that Dr Frank Ferguson, Director of Combined Studies (Coleraine), had requested on behalf of the Coleraine Co-ordinating Group that CertHE, AB and AB with DPP/DIAS exit awards be approved for the combination of Business (Major) and Psychology (Minor) at the Coleraine campus from the current academic year (Paper No LTC/15/37c).

Learning outcomes for CertHE and AB exit awards for Single Honours, Major, Main and Minor strands of Business (Coleraine) had previously been approved at 2010/11 revalidation and the Minor exit awards for Psychology had been approved by the Faculty in June 2015 through the course revision process.

The Campus Co-ordinating Group had reviewed the two sets of learning outcomes and confirmed the appropriateness of the exit awards in this combination.

AGREED: that the exit awards for BSc Hons Business with Psychology be approved.

15.159 PRIZES

The Committee received Paper No LTC/15/38 which set out a proposal to revise the title of the Asidua Prize to Civica Prize and details of two new prizes and two amended prizes which had been approved by Chair's action.

New Prizes Approved by Chair's Action

Axiom Prize

Dairy Council for Northern Ireland Sports Nutrition Award

Amended Prizes Approved by Chair's Action

First Trust Bank Finance and Investment Award

HSBC Prize

AGREED: that the revised title of the Asidua Prize be endorsed for approval on behalf of Council by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience).

VARIATIONS AND DEPARTURES FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

15.160 BSc Hons/MOptom Hons Optometry

The Committee considered a proposal from the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences for four variations to the University's regulatory framework in respect of these degrees (Paper No LTC/15/39a):

- i) to introduce the award of BSc Hons Vision Science for students achieving a Third Class Honours Bachelor's degree;
- ii) to continue with the title of 'Vision Science' for the CertHE and AB exit awards, which differed from that of the final award;
- iii) to introduce a Level 5 contribution to the classification of the BSc Hons award and Level 5 and Level 6 contributions to the classification of MOptom Hons award;
- iv) to make no provision for an Aegrotat award.

15.161 BSc Hons Vision Science Award (Item i)

The Committee noted that the proposal that the qualification for students achieving third class honours in the Bachelor's degree should have the title 'Vision Science' instead of Optometry had been discussed at the revalidation meeting which had recently approved the curriculum from 2015 intake. The Faculty reported that the General Optical Council (GOC) in its revised handbook of July 2015 advised that as 'Optometry' was a protected title it could not be used for an academic award where a student was not eligible to proceed to the professional registration process. Students currently required a 2ii or better degree to proceed automatically to the pre-registration year required to qualify as an optometrist. The Faculty had sought clarification from the GOC on the new guidance but had yet to receive a response.

The Committee noted that it was unclear if the GOC was stating that a third class degree did not meet core professional competencies and would permanently debar a candidate and what the impact would be on previous graduates with third class degrees or current students prior to 2015 intake. The GOC website currently stated that 'trainees who fail to achieve a 2ii in their degree must successfully complete the GOC's Optometry Progression Scheme before entering a pre-registration placement and also that performance in the scheme does not alter the classification of the optometry degree initially awarded'. It was not clear if this scheme had been withdrawn.

AGREED: that the Committee return to consider this matter in light of the clarification provided.

15.162 Exit Awards (Item ii)

The Committee noted that it was University policy for exit awards to carry the same subject title as the main award and that exceptions required a special case to be made. The Faculty proposed that there should be continuing approval for the use of Vision Science for the CertHE and AB exit awards, in view of the protected title guidance. This had previously been approved by the Committee in June 2012.

AGREED: that continuing approval for the title of the exit awards in 'Vision Science' be confirmed.

15.163 Degree Classification and Weighting (Item iii)

It was noted that University regulations state that the classification of awards should be based on the assessment results from the modules at the final level and the current degree met this requirement. The Committee noted that the course team believed that this did not reflect the integrated nature of this course and reported that a level 5 contribution was the practice in all other institutions offering Optometry degrees. The Faculty, therefore, proposed that BSc Hons degree classification be calculated with a 20% contribution from Level 5 and 80% from Level 6. For the new integrated Master's degree Level 5 would contribute 20%, Level 6 40%, and Level 7 40%.

The Committee noted that the GOC accreditation report had stated that classification should be kept under review but had not required lower level contributions. When it received the report in December 2014 the Committee had confirmed that the basis of classification would be kept under review in light of sector developments (min 14.108 refers).

A number of members including a Students' Union representative indicated their support for a level 5 contribution. Others considered the proposal detrimental. The Chair was of the view that, as this was not a professional body requirement and as the implications of the adoption of a GPA system had yet to be considered in detail, it would not be appropriate to approve the request at this stage.

Professor McMullan questioned why the Committee had recently approved a level 5 [and 6] contribution for the BSc Hons Social Work and MPharm Hons. The Chair advised that each case was considered on its merits and should not be considered as precedents for other claims. The previous decisions could be revisited.

AGREED: that the request for a departure from the exit velocity principle not be approved and the Faculty should give consideration to the opportunity provided by GPA.

15.164 Aegrotat Award (Item iv)

The Committee noted that provision had not been made for an Aegrotat award within the BSc Hons and MOptom Hons Optometry. Given the professional constraint on the use of the protected titles and the requirement for students to satisfy specific clinical core competencies, the Faculty considers the award of an Aegrotat degree inappropriate. It was noted that students would be eligible for the AB exit award degree

AGREED: that the proposal not to provide for an Aegrotat degree in Optometry be approved but that the Faculty give consideration to the possible use of the 'Vision Science' title for the award of Aegrotat at Bachelor's degree level, as well as for the AB and CertHE.

Duration 2 hours

15 December 2015

AGF/CA/lh