

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

REPORT OF THE EVALUATION PANEL MEETING FOR FdSc FOOD AND DRINK MANUFACTURE AT COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL ENTERPRISE (CAFRE) LOUGHRY CAMPUS

8 MAY 2018

PANEL: Professor H Farley, Associate Dean (Education), Ulster University Business School (Chair)
Professor A McKillop, Associate Dean (Education), Faculty of Life and Health Sciences, Ulster University
Mrs S Poulson, Principal Lecturer, School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences, Nottingham Trent University
Mrs V Sutton, Principal Lecturer (Teaching/Programme Leader), National Centre for Food Manufacturing, University of Lincoln
Mrs A Givan, Human Resource Director, Linden Foods, Dungannon

APOLOGIES: Dr J Bates, Lecturer in Library and Information Management, School of Education, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Ulster University

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Marley, Subject Partnership Manager [Faculty of Life and Health Sciences]

Ms C Reid, Subject Partnership Manager [Ulster University Business School]

Mrs K McCafferty, Academic Office, Ulster University

1 INTRODUCTION

The FdSc in Food and Drink Manufacture has been designed to be 'the underpinning academic qualification for a Level 5 Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) in Food and Drink Manufacture'.

The focus will be on aspects of food science, processing and quality systems and will facilitate the upskilling of existing employees.

Funding is to be provided by the Department for the Economy (DfE) with the department paying the training supplier costs for the 'off-the-job' training. The employer will pay the apprentice for the contracted hours, including the day that they are training. CAFRE will receive a staged income per student as they progress through the qualification.

The delivery of the programme will be through a part-time block release and all modules will be compulsory.

Graduates from the FdSc in Food and Drink Manufacture will have the opportunity to progress to the following courses currently offered at CAFRE:

- BSc Hons Food Technology
- BSc Hons Food Design and Nutrition
- BSc Hons Food Business Management

Progression onto Level 6 of the BSc Hons Consumer Management and Food Innovation (part-time) programme at Ulster University will also be possible.

It is the intention of CAFRE to work with DfE to develop a Level 6 Apprenticeship programme to which the Level 5 HLA graduates would progress. The college will also be seeking professional body accreditation by the Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST) for the FdSc in Food and Drink Manufacture programme.

The Panel confirmed that the minimum student numbers on the programme should be set at 10 and the maximum at 20.

2 DOCUMENTATION

The Panel received the following documentation:

- Course Submission
- Ulster University Guidelines for Evaluation Panels
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Studies, 2016
- Characteristics Statement for Foundation Degrees, 2015
- Statement from the Subject Partnership Manager (CA4)
- Library and IT reports
- Preliminary comments from Panel members

3 MEETING WITH SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

3.1 Overview

The Panel went on a tour of Loughry campus and was very impressed with the facilities that would be available to both the staff and students involved in the new programme.

The Panel noted that the FdSc in Food and Drink Manufacture was in line with the desired policy direction set out by a publication from the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs' (DAERA). The 'Knowledge Framework', 2017 sets out the rationale for DAERA's involvement in education, training and technology exchange. One intended outcome of this strategy is to ensure all new managers in the food processing sector have at least a Level 5 qualification in a relevant discipline.

The Panel noted that CAFRE provided programmes ranging from Level 2 to Level 8. The new FdSc in Food and Drink Manufacture was designed to meet industry needs and assist in providing suitable graduates to help address skills issues in the sector.

The programme will match Level 5 and above and will combine academic study and experience working in the industry. The Panel noted that the DfE had asked CAFRE to get involved in developing a suitable programme given the importance of the food and drink industry to the Northern Ireland economy.

3.2 Progression Routes

The Panel enquired about possible progression opportunities to Level 6 and noted that students would have the opportunity to progress onto relevant full-time and part-time Level 6 programmes currently offered at CAFRE. The Panel noted that the mode of delivery for these programmes would be part-time and not as block release.

The Panel noted that students could also progress to Ulster University.

The Panel heard that CAFRE planned to develop a Level 6 progression route for graduates of the FdSc in Food and Drink Manufacture within the next three years.

The Panel asked if the other programmes currently offered by CAFRE complemented the new foundation degree or were in conflict with it. The Senior Team explained that in their view foundation degrees in the future would be full-time only and that the HLA suited being offered part-time. The Panel noted that there had been a lot of interest in the programme and was informed by the Senior Team that many companies were building HLAs into their future planning strategies.

The Panel noted that a training team from CAFRE was continuously out working with employers and that the block delivery model had full support from the industry.

3.3 Staffing Numbers

The Panel asked the Senior Team if they felt the current staff numbers would be sufficient as student numbers on the programme grew. The Senior Team explained that the Government recognised the importance of the programme and supported growth through education. The Panel noted that the Government could accommodate additional staff if required. The Senior Team explained that all the programmes offered by CAFRE were policy lead and very driven with all funding provided by Government.

4 MEETING WITH COURSE TEAM

4.1 Development of Programme

The Panel asked the Course Team to elaborate on how they got to this point. The Course Team explained that they had been working on apprenticeship pilots for Levels 2 and 3 for the past two years. The DfE, who were also working on the development of HLAs, approached the college and subsequently the programme was developed. The Panel noted that the focus of the programme was on the industry and supplemented other programmes currently being delivered.

The Panel asked the Course Team to clarify how the block release mode of delivery would work. The Panel also commented on whether multiple cohorts in the future would attend on the same week.

The Course Team explained that they had consulted with the industry to find out if the block delivery model was appealing and found that employers liked the idea. The Panel noted that the employers had stated that they wanted the block delivery weeks to take place at less busy times throughout the year. The Course Team explained that all student groups would attend on the same weeks. The Panel also noted that a supplementary week would be held in May of each year for those students who had been unable to attend one of the timetabled sessions.

4.2 Student Support

The Panel asked the Course Team if they felt the college, in terms of both staff and physical resources, could support all student year groups coming at the same time.

The Course Team explained that there was flexibility and they wanted to make it attractive to employers. The Course Team advised the Panel that they felt they had sufficient resources

to support the delivery of the programme. The Panel noted that the 'Moodle' VLE would provide learner support and deliver parts of the programme in addition to on-campus support. The Course Team also advised the Panel that they could change the weeks to accommodate employer needs.

4.3 Programme Structure

The Panel asked for more information on module delivery and support for students between the blocks. The Panel also questioned the impact on staff with so many mentor visits planned. The Panel felt that three visits was perhaps excessive.

The Course Team referred to the exemplar timetables in the module descriptions and explained to the Panel that they planned to deliver all the content during the block week. The Panel noted that the student would then complete a significant piece of coursework within their workplace. The Panel noted that this piece of work comprised three parts with mentor support provided at each stage either through face-to-face meetings or through Moodle. The Course Team explained that each student would have a CAFRE mentor as a common point of contact.

The Course Team informed the Panel that the tripartite agreement, signed by all parties, would set out the responsibilities and obligations of the employers, the student and the training provider.

The Panel questioned whether the Course Team would be able to deliver the content of a module in one week and used the 'Quality Management and Environmental Standards' module as an example. The Course Team explained that the module used by the Panel as an example had a number of practicals. The Course Team believed these practicals could be completed as part of a mini audit around the campus. The exercise would allow the students see what the college was doing with regard to quality management. The Course Team felt that there would be an overview of concepts as students needed to have an awareness but not necessarily need to be an expert.

The Panel asked if time had been built in for the mentor to speak with the employer and noted that this would happen every 8 weeks.

4.4 Induction

The Panel asked the Course Team how and when students were made fully aware of the requirements and expectations of the programme.

The Course Team explained that students would receive a comprehensive induction that would emphasise the importance of student commitment and the intensity of the programme.

The Panel noted that an induction would take place between Levels 4 and 5. The Course Team emphasised that students would be given a lot of support and at the end of the block week would be given further direction. The Panel noted that study skills would be taught and reinforced throughout the programme.

The Panel noted that the Course Team anticipated the age range of students coming onto the programme to be quite broad.

4.5 Student Background

The Panel noted that there were three potential routes onto the programme. Students currently studying on BTEC programmes delivered at CAFRE and Level 2 and 3 students

had all shown an interest in the programme. The Panel also noted that there had been some interest from schools.

The Panel asked what would happen if a student was not performing well on the programme and noted that the issue would most likely be addressed through their contract of employment. The Course Team felt that the employer might keep the student on but ask them to leave the programme. The Course Team explained that the 'Apprenticeship Strategy' referred to a 'new job, new role' and that they would expect a student to move into a new role or show progression within their employment.

The Course Team informed the Panel that normally employers selected someone from within their organisation who they envisaged moving into a new role.

4.6 Module Effort Hours

The Panel commented on the effort hours for the modules which when totalled appeared to exceed the proposed classroom based teaching hours suggested of approximately 35 hours per week. The Panel asked the Course Team to clarify in the revised submission if hours had been allocated to online support and delivery of the module.

4.7 Mentor Training/qualifications

The Panel asked if mentors were required to have relevant training and qualifications for the role and noted their suitability was decided by the employer. The Panel also noted that employer mentors received an induction explaining the requirements and obligations of the role and would receive additional support from the CAFRE mentor.

The Course Team informed the Panel that the college also worked with the employers in helping to identify suitable mentors.

The Panel noted that the DfE was looking at levels of mentoring and how training could be broadened to ensure everyone was performing at the same level.

4.8 Assessment

The Panel asked the Course Team to explain the rationale for the different types of assessments.

The Course Team explained that the Ulster University curriculum design principles had been taken into consideration and the assessments linked to the learning outcomes. The Panel also noted that the Course Team had attended the recent Ulster University curriculum events. The Course Team explained that they had looked at what students would like to do and what would benefit employers.

The Panel commented on the consistency of word counts to assessment weightings. The Course Team explained that they had looked at what a type of assessment would be worth but agreed to review word counts.

The Panel enquired about the formative assessment at the end of the block week and asked if this was completed in the evenings as homework. For those students out of academia for a while the Panel felt this might prove difficult.

The Course Team explained that it would depend on the module. The Panel noted that each day would start at 9.00am and finish at 5.00pm and that the Course Team anticipated all assessments to be completed during these hours. The Panel noted that students would be

provided with suitable guidance at all stages and study skills would be covered and reinforced.

Each module would have a small piece of coursework and the Course Team felt that this could be completed by the end of the week. The Panel noted that tutorials would also be used as support.

4.9 Feedback

The Panel enquired about the use of digital feedback and noted that the college used 'Turnitin'. Online feedback was also provided.

The Panel noted that group work would be used when students were looking at case studies. As the students would be coming from different employers the Course Team felt that it would not be possible to ask them to do group work outside of the classroom. The final assessment would be an individual piece of work.

4.10 Work Based Learning

The Panel enquired about the Work Based Learning component and asked if the employer was required to demonstrate the percentage of off-the-job training being provided. The Panel noted that there was no specific requirement for a set amount of work based learning to be provided by the employer.

The Panel noted that the DfE was looking at developing a quality qualification as a way of recognising other transferable skills the students were attaining.

The Panel felt that there was a lot of assessment based around the workplace and asked to what extent the employer was required to provide time for the student to undertake their WBL coursework.

The Course Team explained that the tripartite agreement would state the agreed time a student should be given. The agreement was considered important and gave the students security. The Course Team stressed that it was important for the employer to agree an amount of time for the student to complete work in relation to the programme. Commitment from the students and the employer was important.

The Course Team explained that the WBL 1 and 2 would be industry-based projects and that the employer would be looking for something of value from the student.

The Panel noted that all students would be in employment and would be following the Higher Level Apprenticeship route.

4.11 APEL

The Panel commented on the admissions criteria and the fact that there was no obvious route for non-traditional students. The Course Team informed the Panel that they currently used APEL for modules exemptions but not for admissions. It was noted that the course regulations provided in the document had omitted reference to the APEL process.

The Course Team stated that they would take guidance from Ulster University and that the Subject Partnership Manager would make the final decision.

4.12 Modules

Food Manufacture and Packaging Technology

The Panel commented on the K2 learning outcome for the above module which referred to being able 'to identify relevant legislation and codes of practice for the manufacture of a food or drink produce'. The Panel felt it was not clear how this was mapped and assessed.

The Course Team explained that legislation was embedded and assessed through all the modules but appreciated that this may not have been entirely clear in the document.

Quality Management and Environmental Standards

The Panel noted that there was no mention of Quality Management Systems in the above module. The Course Team explained that this topic was covered in the Level 4 modules but noted the Panel's opinion that it should also be included in the Level 5 module.

Principles of Financial Management

The Panel asked what the rationale was for having so much financial management in the module and if students needed to be doing book-keeping.

The Course Team felt that students needed to gain a complete overview of the various systems and processes within an organisation and understand where information came from. The Panel noted that employers wanted students to have the right skills and be aware of such aspects as budgets and forecasting.

4.13 Pre-Requisites

The Panel asked why pre-requisites were needed but noted that the Course Team had decided not to keep them and they should have been taken out of the module descriptions.

5 CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel commended the Team on the following:

- The excellent resources to support the programme and students and in particular 'Moodle'
- The strong relationships between the college and employers in the industry
- The very committed and enthusiastic course team
- The innovative response in developing a programme in response to industry needs
- The alignment of the provision to Government policy

The Panel agreed to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee that the provision be approved for five years (intakes 2018/19 to 2022/23 inclusive) subject to the conditions and recommendations of the Panel being addressed and a satisfactory response and a revised submission being forwarded to the Academic Office by **19 June 2018** for approval by the Chair of the Panel.

Conditions

- (i) That the course team review the module descriptions to clearly show the flexibility around the hours of delivery and describe how the block delivery will operate, eg, when students will be in class, independent study, online support, etc;

- (ii) That the course team clarify the mapping of learning outcomes, for example, how legislation will be covered and assessed;
- (iii) that the regulatory and standards matters identified by the Academic Office be addressed (appendix).

Recommendations

- (i) That the course team clarify how the employers' support and commitment to providing study time for students will be ensured and visible from the start;
- (ii) That the revised document clarify how the three mentor visits between the block deliveries will be conducted, ie, in person, skype, Moodle, etc; That the Course Team work closely with the Faculty with regard to the admissions process and in particular the entry requirements as students numbers grow.

APPRECIATION

The Chair thanked all the members of the Panel and in particular, the external members, for their valuable contribution to the validation exercise.

