UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 9 December 2014 at the Jordanstown campus

PRESENT

Professor D A McAlister (Chair), Professor A Adair, Professor R R Barnett, Professor P Carmichael, Professor C Curran, Professor P Hanna, Professor D Hazlett, Professor D Heenan, Ms A Honan, Professor J Jędrzejewski, Professor F Lyons, Mr C Mackey, Mr L McCurry, Mr D McGivern, Professor H McKenna, Professor A McKillop, Professor M McKinney, Dr T McLernon, Professor G McMullan, Dr A Melvin, Professor I Montgomery, Dr R Moreland, Mrs U Quinn, Mrs A Scanlon (representing Dr B Murphy), Dr J A C Webb

APOLOGIES

Dr M Boyd, Miss C Cochrane, Professor C Curran, Ms S Curran, Professor D Heenan, Professor L Maguire, Professor M McHugh, Professor R J Millar, Dr B Murphy

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs C G Avery, Mr A G Faulkner

UNRESERVED

14.95   DR J A C WEBB

The Chair thanked Dr Webb for his contribution to the work of the Committee and wished him well for his early retirement at the end of January.

14.96   MINUTES

The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2014 were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

14.97   Award Gradings in DPP and DIAS (Min 14.62)

The Committee at its June meeting had recommended to Senate that the award mark for the Diploma in Professional Practice/(International) be lowered to 40% in line with other undergraduate awards and that a Commendation be introduced at 60% in addition to Distinction (70%) with effect from the 2015/16 placement year (min 14.42 refers). At its October meeting the Committee further recommended to Senate that the award gradings for the Diploma in International Area Studies be aligned to reflect those recommended for the DPP/(I).

The Chair reported that Senate, at its meeting on 19 November, had approved both recommendations but it was noted that this was subject to a review of the

regulations to ensure that the proposed change in regulations would not disadvantage students. It was reported that Professor McMahon-Beattie had expressed concern at the Senate meeting that students might be disadvantaged. The Committee noted that currently students in the 40% - 49% band passed the year and were able to progress to the final year of study but did not receive the associate award. Under the revised regulations, these students would progress and also receive the DPP award.

It was noted that, in making the recommendation, the Committee had noted that students unable to take or complete the placement year owing to exceptional circumstances such as redundancy or non-availability of placement would still be able, in accordance with existing policy, to proceed. It was not evident that the amendment to regulations disadvantaged students.

It was suggested that the issue raised at Senate might relate to the model of assessment adopted for the placement year in Professor McMahon-Beattie's School and that this could be revisited in light of the alternative models approved by the Committee at its June meeting.

AGREED: that Faculties and the Sub-Committee on Employability be invited to consider further the consequence of failure in the placement year or non-completion for reasons other than redundancy and to report back to the next meeting.

14.98   Deposit of Master's Dissertations of Distinction Standard in the University Library (Min 14.63)

As part of the continuing discussion on the merits of the requirement for Distinction-level dissertations to be deposited in the Library, the Committee had agreed at the last meeting that, in order to provide exemplars for current students, the VLE course support area should be used to host an appropriate sample of such dissertations, for a minimum period of five years, with the sample size and period determined by the Faculty/course committee. This had called into question the value of the Library holding Distinction-level dissertations, whether electronically or in hard copy, but a number of Faculties had commented that the interdisciplinary nature of some courses meant that the Library was the appropriate host to ensure broad access.

Regulations currently retained this expectation pending a resolution to the question of public access. The Committee noted that the Library's general 10 year retention policy for dissertations, endorsed by the Committee in June, was appropriate.

The Chair reported that the Librarian had reported that digitisation through the British Library ETHOS service was not an option, as it only applied to doctoral theses and the Library's own scanning service would be a very time-consuming process. Professor McKenna informed the Committee that a new Research Data Management tool was being purchased by the University and this might accommodate master's dissertations. A further report from the Librarian would be received at a future meeting.

14.99   FdSc Applied Industrial Sciences at Southern Regional College (Min 14.68)

Following the October meeting, the Faculty had revised its view of the readiness of the College to offer the proposed programme and an evaluation meeting had been held in late November, with the course being recommended for approval for January 2015 start.

14.100   VLE Content Copyright Review: Internal Audit (Min 14.83)

The Chair reported that the Reprographics Manager had now issued review reports for the 10 sample Blackboard modules to the appropriate Faculties and ADDL. Each module spreadsheet included a list of items that presented or could present a copyright risk for review. Updated University Copyright for Teaching guidelines had also been circulated and Faculties were encouraged to review all teaching materials to ensure compliance.

14.101   Final Year Dissertation/Project and Compulsory Placement in Undergraduate and Integrated Master's Degrees (Mins 14.84 and 14.41)

The Committee had recommended to Senate that Faculties make provision for a final year dissertation/project module and a period of placement as compulsory components in all undergraduate and Integrated Master's degree programmes from the September 2015 intake with further guidance on the latter to be developed by the Sub-Committee on Employability.

Professor McAlister reported that Senate at its November meeting had approved the recommendation for a compulsory dissertation/project module which should be considered during this academic year with early implementation where possible in those courses which did not already have such a module.

Senate had noted that the provision of a period of placement as an integral part of the curriculum presented challenges for some areas. It had considered the use of the term 'placement' misleading as a variety of methods of providing relevant work experience was possible and this would need to be appropriate to the individual course/subject. Senate had agreed that the intention and potential range of activities should be defined in guidance to Faculties and that study abroad might be able to fulfil the objective. The proposal to include compulsory work-based learning (once defined) in all courses had therefore been agreed in principle on the understanding that the detail would be worked out with Faculties over the remainder of the current academic year with implementation at an appropriate stage thereafter, not necessarily from the September 2015 intake.

The Chair said that there had been extensive discussion regarding how this requirement might be met and confirmed that further guidance on models would be provided by the Sub-Committee on Employability.

14.102   Research Teaching Nexus (Min 14.85)

Professor McKenna expressed his disappointment that, although there were some highly creative teaching innovations within the University, the representation of such pedagogies in the 2014 REF submission had been small. The Chair reported that Professor Hazlett would encourage publication of pedagogic research through

CHERP activities. The prominence given to this topic in the REF feedback report would help determine future approaches.

14.103 <u>UK Quality Code for HE: Chapter B6: Accreditation of Prior Learning</u> (Min 14.86)

The Chair reported that the Department of Employability and Marketing had identified an opportunity to enhance the prominence given to APL with the launch of the new website in February 2015.

14.104 <u>Education for Sustainable Development Review Group</u> (Min 14.88)

Professor Montgomery reported that Mr McCurry had agreed to join the University's Environmental Sustainability Steering Group.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

14.105 <u>Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies</u>

Professor McAlister reported that the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies had been published by the QAA at the end of November. This brought together the existing framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and that for Scotland into a single document. The consultation document had been considered by the Committee at its June meeting (min 14.49 refers).

14.106 <u>Distinguished Learning and Teaching Awards; Personal Professorship</u>

The Committee noted that the Vice-Chancellor had taken Chair's action on behalf of Senate to approve the following Distinguished Learning and Teaching Awards which would be presented at a graduation ceremony in the following week:

<u>Individual Awards</u>

Dr K Hack, School of Biomedical Sciences
Dr C Carruthers, Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management

<u>Team Awards</u>

Law Clinic – Dr G McKeever (Lead), Mr C White, Dr E McGuinness, Dr E McNamee, Mrs K Sinclair, Mrs E Daly

Student Employability – Mrs J Wylie (Lead), Professor G Armstrong, Mr B Byers, Mrs C McCann, Mrs H Foster, Mr P Stewart

The Chair congratulated the recipients of the awards and also Professor Hazlett on her promotion to a personal Chair in Interprofessional Pedagogy and Practice.

PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODY ACCREDITATION

14.107   BSc Hons Architectural Technology and Management

The Committee received the report and response to the accreditation visit of the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists in October 2013 (Paper No LTC/14/32a). It had approved continuing accreditation for five years from that date, making graduates of the degree eligible for Associate Membership of the Institute.

The Committee noted that the Faculty response clarified how it had or would address the recommendations regarding support for placement, over-assessment and assessment scheduling and the condition relating to the content and delivery of technical detailing. The forthcoming revalidation (2015/16) would provide an opportunity for further enhancement.

Professor Montgomery reported that the President of CIAT had visited the Annual Show and that this had provided an opportunity for a professional development evening which reflected the flourishing relationship with the professional body and their ongoing support for the programme.

14.108   BSc Hons Optometry

The Committee received the report and response to the accreditation visit of the General Optical Council in April 2014 (Paper No LTC/14/32b). The degree had been approved for a further five years, subject to satisfactory annual monitoring returns and two conditions relating to the maintenance of existing resourcing levels and monitoring of the impact of classification based on final year only. The four recommendations had been addressed.

The Chair advised that classification would be kept under review by the University in line with sector developments.

Professor McMullan thanked Professor K Saunders and the Optometry team for their work and also the Vice-Chancellor for meeting the GOC team during the visit.

14.109   SUB-COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYABILITY

Professor McMullan presented the report of the first meeting of the reconstituted Sub-Committee held on 26 November 2014 (Paper No LTC/14/33).

14.110   Placement (SCE Min 14.31)

Professor McMullan thanked Faculties for their engagement regarding the proposed approaches to the incorporation of a period of placement in Honours degrees and indicated that guidance on this was being finalised.

14.111   Diary Dates (SCE Min 14.32)

The Committee noted that key dates included the sixth annual Employability Conference on 6 May 2015 and the seventh Placement Employer of the Year Awards Ceremony on 13 May 2015.

14.112 <u>Sub-Committee Working Groups</u> (SCE Min 14.33)

Given the expanded terms of reference and institutional priorities in the area of employability, the Committee noted that four working groups had been established: Work Experience; Employability Monitoring; Employers and Entrepreneurship; Student Employability Skills.

Professor McMullan extended his thanks to the chair of each group for undertaking this role and reported that sub-committee members had identified the group they wished to join. Given the drive to increase work experience and to enhance measures to support employability within Faculties, the Head of School representing the Faculty on the Sub-Committee would have an important role in reporting developments to their Faculty Executive.

14.113 <u>Bursaries/Scholarships for Work Experience</u> (SCE Min 14.35)

The Committee noted that during the pilot in 2013/14 £40,000 had been distributed and that in 2014/15 £160,000 was available in the Work Experience Fund.

14.114 <u>DLHE and the Student Journey</u> (Min SCE 14.36)

The Committee noted that the introduction of an 'Employability Journey' in September 2015 would identify a student's place on their own employability journey from the time of enrolment, with regular monitoring of progress. Targeted emails with suggested actions would benefit students and reports would be produced at faculty, school and programme level to provide an evidence base for employability interventions.

In considering the outcomes of the 2013/14 DLHE survey, Professor McMullan reported that the Sub-Committee had noted that the University was below the national average in terms of graduate-level employment. The fact that the vast majority of Ulster graduates remained in Northern Ireland was a limiting factor in this regard. On a positive note it was reported that 2013/14 had seen a record number of Ulster students studying abroad and there was evidence of more students showing willingness to do so. The International Department had been tasked with raising awareness of such opportunities. Professor McKillop reported that new information available on the Department's web pages would be of use to staff promoting study abroad.

14.115 DIGITAL LEARNING SUB-COMMITTEE

Professor Hanna presented the report of the meeting held on 11 November 2014 (Paper No LTC/14/34).

14.116 <u>Terms of Reference and Membership</u> (Item 1)

The Committee noted that the terms of reference and membership had been amended to take on board the Committee's comments at its October meeting (min 14.80 refers) and that Professor L Clarke would not join the Sub-Committee but would be a member of the Advisory and Editorial Board.

14.117   The Ulster Educational Technology Suite (Item 2.1)

The absence of a synchronous virtual collaboration tool had been identified as a gap in the suite of resources by the VLE Futures Working Group. It was considered essential to have such a resource for online distance learning where it could enable virtual classrooms in real time, webinars, and lecture capture and it was also considered critical for distributed learning such as placements. Staff were increasingly using third party tools to compensate for the missing functionality.

Professor Hanna reported that the Sub-Committee's recommendation to address this gap through 'Blackboard Collaborate' had been approved by the Senior Executive Team at its recent meeting.

14.118   Core Funding and Renewal of the VLE and Associated Technologies (Item 2.2)

The Committee noted that the proposal for a fully managed and externally hosted infrastructure to ensure business continuity and improvements when the current licence expired in July 2015 had, due to the urgency, been presented directly to SET. The Sub-Committee had agreed that a robust and hosted digital learning platform was necessary to support institutional growth of digital learning, to maximise the learning and teaching environment. The proposal had been approved by SET. While the investment was recognised as significant, so too were the immediate and future benefits. A 'Platinum' Engagement Plan had been recommended to meet agreed support needs during the migration to the external environment.

Professor Adair noted that there had been unanimous support at SET for a reliable and flexible infrastructure which would be crucial given the campus development plans and the aims of the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

14.119   VLE Standardisation (Item 2.3)

The Committee noted that the Sub-Committee had discussed the benefits of standardised module and programme presence on the VLE. The Office for Digital Learning had been piloting advisory templates which set minimum expectations, without restricting innovation especially for those modules and courses with a strong history of online presence. When agreed, the template would be compulsory for new and all appropriate modules of revalidated programmes and optional for modules with a mature online presence.

14.120   Digital Learning Strategy (Item 3)

Professor Hanna reported that a Roadmap of Change for the Digital Learning Strategy had been created and peer review panels had been confirmed. Educational technologies, pedagogies and models had been identified to support each of the five stages of development which the Strategy would span.

14.121   Ulster MOOCs and Open Learning Working Group (Item 7.3)

The Committee noted that the Sub-Committee had explored MOOCs and Open Learning initiatives. The University was interested in developing high quality partnerships and, as opportunities with the University of Leeds had been slower than expected, the University was also now considering a proposal for an Ulster iTunesU site with a particular focus on dissemination of research.

Working with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), this was to be explored along with open learning opportunities at the research-teaching nexus. Professor McKenna reported that a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed with Dublin City University with a view to developing a joint MOOC.

Professor Hanna reported that this working group was due to be stood down in February, but depending on developments the membership might be re-shaped as an Open Learning Project Board.

UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS 2013/14

14.122   Certificate of Personal and Professional Development (CPPD)

Mrs Scanlon presented the annual review report for the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development framework (Paper No LTC/14/35a).

She reported that following a recent conference the Centre had been invited to share its practice in managing and supporting short course activity with a number of universities in the Republic of Ireland and that it was gratifying to learn that the University's arrangements were perceived as leading the field.

14.123   Introduction (Item 1)

The Committee noted that CPPD modules were intended to support those wishing to achieve higher level skills and/or undertake further HE study; as curriculum enrichment for full-time students to give credit for achievement of employability skills and understanding; and as workforce development for employers to enable recognition and accreditation of skills of their employees at level 3 or 4.

Mrs Scanlon highlighted the fact that modules in the framework had recruited 32% of the total part-time undergraduate population with 1411 students in 2013/14 and a further 2553 full-time students had taken designated modules. Of the 239 live modules, 65 were available to the part-time external market.

14.124   Programme Management (Item 2)

The Committee noted that, following discussions with the Academic Office regarding the process of adding modules to the CPPD framework through the new Curriculum Management System, the following stages of approval were now recommended:

1   Proposer (ie Module Co-ordinator/Course Director).
2   CPPD Programme Director in Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education (to ensure that the module met the framework's criteria and was formally associated with it).
3   Head of School (where module located).
4   Dean.
5   Academic Office.

It was noted that the CA3 form would be modified to advise proposers to forward the module to the Centre before it was considered by the Head of School. The Centre would inform relevant staff of the approval process.

AGREED: that the outline process for approval through the CMS be endorsed.

14.125   Income (Item 3)

The Committee noted that the financial return for students undertaking the study of modules within the CPPD framework was realised through module fee income and non-MaSN funding. The income generated directly through fees in 2013/14 was £143,000 and the non-MaSN element was 88.7 FTE. The Chair welcomed this growing contribution to protecting the block grant and recognised that Faculties were actively supporting this activity.

It was noted that fees were charged mainly using two rates: £8.85 in 2014/15 (30% reduction of the standard rate) for applicants deemed to meet widening access and participation criteria and £12.75 for all other part-time student applicants. Premium fees were applied where the market could bear the cost. While full-time students did not incur an additional fee for CPPD modules nor did the modules contribute to non-MaSN funding, Mrs Scanlon commented that they added value through their role in supporting student achievement, progression and enhanced employability.

14.126   Academic Planning (Item 4)

It was noted that, in order to enhance the transparency of the planning and review process across the institution, the Centre was working with Faculties to develop Professional and Continuing Education Plans this semester, and Mrs Scanlon thanked the Faculties for their positive engagement in this process. Future CPPD annual reports would indicate student numbers by school/department.

Mrs Quinn reported that, given the role of mentors in the workplace particularly in relation to Higher Level Apprenticeship programmes, the Southern Regional College had expressed an interest in its staff taking a particular module in the future.

The Vice-Chancellor encouraged Mrs Scanlon to liaise with Professor McKenna regarding possible joint opportunities with Dublin City University.

14.127   Staff/Student Consultation (Item 6)

The CPPD First Impression Survey had been distributed each semester to part-time students, while those undertaking modules as curriculum enhancement

continued to be surveyed through the NSS. The success and satisfaction levels acknowledged by work-based students was considered to be very good to excellent. Positive feedback had also been received from employers.

14.128 <u>Marketing and Promotion</u> (Item 8)

The Committee noted that further development of the online prospectus in support of short courses was a priority in planning for 2014/15 and this was intended to provide a clear external view for this short course activity.

14.129 <u>Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development</u>

Mrs Scanlon presented the annual review report for the Postgraduate Certificate of Personal and Professional Development framework (Paper No LTC/14/35b).

14.130 <u>Introduction</u> (Item 1)

The Committee noted that the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development (PGCPD) award framework for credit-bearing short course modules at Level 7 had been established in semester 2 2012/13 and had expanded considerably in 2013/14 to offer 46 modules to the external market.

14.131 <u>Programme Management</u> (Item 2)

The Committee noted that the Programme Committee, comprising Faculty representatives and the Programme Director from the Centre for Flexible and Continuing Education, had been established and that the first Examination Board for the Postgraduate Certificate had been held in September. The Centre now recommended that a Board also be held in June. The Chair advised that the Programme Committee had the authority to convene Boards at any appropriate time to complete the examination and recommendation for award processes.

The Committee endorsed the proposed process for the approval of modules in the PGCPD framework through the CMS, which would be the same as that for the CPPD provision (min 14.124 refers).

14.132 <u>Student Enrolment and Income</u> (Items 3 and 4)

The Committee noted that in 2013/14 63 students had enrolled on 15 modules. Two students had completed modules to the value of 60 credits and fulfilled the requirement for the Postgraduate Certificate award. The fee income generated in 2013/14 was £42,081, with a non-MaSN contribution of 11.8 FTEs. In the current year to date, 66 students had enrolled with this figure expected to reach 140 by the end of the year.

14.133 <u>Academic Planning</u> (Item 5)

The Committee noted that enrolments were analysed by school and faculty to facilitate informed review and planning, both within ADDL and across Faculties. Recruitment had been greatest where a targeted approach was taken, with associated professional accreditation or where the module met a specific demand for workforce skills development, with employer support or sponsorship.

14.134   Staff/Student Consultation (Item 8)

Mrs Scanlon reported that students had been surveyed at the end of each semester and that, while the number responding had been small, the responses were highly favourable with all respondents confirming that teaching had been of a high standard and that their skills and knowledge had increased. The majority stated that they planned to take further short courses.

14.135   Fees (Item 9)

Owing to recent requests from public sector bodies and employers for discounted fees for large cohorts, it was proposed that a fee model for discounted fees be explored and that this should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Professor Adair reported that other universities encouraged alumni to participate in short courses through discounted fees if there was a sufficient number of students. The Committee was supportive of this approach, and it was expected that the Faculty would receive the reduced fee income, with no other 'penalty' to compensate.

14.136   Marketing and Promotion

It was noted that the short course prospectus on the University's website was the main mechanism for publicising postgraduate short course modules. Consultation would continue with the Information Services Department to achieve better integration into the main University online prospectus and its functionality. As the market for the modules within the framework was spread across a range of sectors, Mrs Scanlon commented that each individual short course would require its own marketing campaign, to include the use of social media, targeted emails and Faculty/School networks.

14.137   EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS 2013/14

Professor McAlister presented the annual overview report identifying general issues arising from reports received from external examiners for the 2013/14 academic year (Paper No LTC/14/36).

As in previous years, the vast majority of external examiners had confirmed that standards were appropriate. Many commended specific aspects of programmes but the small number of examples of inconsistency or poor practice stood out in contrast. These required immediate attention from course/subject committees with a timely response to the external examiners. Faculties should take account of the more general issues identified, which were similar to those in previous years, but were usually raised in different courses. Good, early communication with the external helped to ensure the development of a positive relationship with clarity of expectation on both sides.

14.138   Participation in the Moderation Process (4)

The vast majority expressed satisfaction with their involvement in the moderation process with a number describing the conduct of the Board of Examiners as exemplary.

The Chair highlighted the importance of timely involvement in the approval of coursework and assessment schemes and in undertaking sampling in line with University policy. She reminded Faculties of the need to ensure that externals were involved in the moderation of modules which contributed to an exit award.

Professor Jędrzejewski stated that the requirement to moderate level 4 modules in a degree, even though very few students might leave with a CertHE, added to the workload of staff and external examiners. Professor McAlister emphasised that external examiners were not third markers and that their role in moderation was to ensure fairness for all students within cohorts and the robustness of standards for all awards made.

14.139   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/scholarship informing the curriculum and pedagogy.

14.140   Assessment (6)

External examiners were generally satisfied with assessment standards and their reports provided evidence of good use of assessment criteria and a wide range of appropriate assessment methods. They commented favourably on the quality of feedback provided to students. However, there were a small number of negative comments regarding variability in feedback, with inconsistency in detail, quality and timeliness.

Over-assessment was referred to as an issue in a not insignificant number of programmes, together with 'bunching' of assessments.

Professor McAlister mentioned that a number of external examiners had again commented on concerns voiced by students regarding the assessment of group work and in particular that an individual's mark could be depressed by others' performance and that there was insufficient opportunity for them to distinguish themselves individually. It appeared from student feedback that University policy regarding the assessment of individual contributions was not always being adhered to and this needed to be remedied urgently by Faculties.

A small number of externals associated with postgraduate courses suggested that a 'Commendation' band should be introduced for the 60-69% range. It was noted that the Committee had discussed a proposal for a Commendation in December 2012 (min 12.144 refers), but that it was not supported at that time. The Committee was willing to re-open the debate on this topic and Deans were asked to consult with their constituencies and report back to the next meeting.

14.141   Marking Standards (7)

Generally marking standards were considered to be appropriate with a number praising very high standards.

It was noted that, for undergraduate Computing provision at Jordanstown, the external examiner had referred to inconsistent internal 'moderating and tallying' of coursework and examination scripts through omissions in the audit trail and that the good practice in relation to the verification of marks and the annotation of blank and unmarked pages of script had not been followed fully. Dr Webb reported that the Faculty had initiated a review of its codes of practice for examination procedures, as there was a view that some might be overly prescriptive and a hostage to fortune. The Chair considered that Faculties should ensure that they did not maintain overly bureaucratic and time-consuming practices which did not contribute to the assurance of standards or the improvement of the student experience.

14.142   Quality of Candidates' Work (8)

Generally the quality of candidates' work was regarded favourably. A noted concern was poor referencing skills, particularly in college provision. Poor study skills had been highlighted in a number of programmes.

Concerns had been raised about the quality of student work at QA Higher Education, particularly in relation to the high resit and failure rates compared to those of students studying on the parent programmes.

In one modular subject the external examiner had commented on the level of plagiarism at level 6 and that some students appeared to be serial offenders.

14.143   Student Learning and Comparability with other Institutions (9)

Comments were overwhelmingly positive and examiners had highlighted the effect of the placement year in instilling student confidence and improving final year performance.

In a number of courses external examiners drew attention to a perceived insufficiency of staff resources, particularly in the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences and for the subject of English.

14.144   Administration (10)

The overwhelming majority praised the efficiency of the administrative arrangements together with the support and hospitality provided. The induction session was particularly helpful in clarifying the external examiner's role. Professor McAlister encouraged Faculties to facilitate externals' desire to meet with students and to consider other opportunities to do this outside their scheduled visits, if necessary with the use of appropriate technology.

AGREED that:

i)   substantive issues raised by examiners must be promptly addressed by the relevant course/subject teams and reported through the course/subject management process, and that external examiners be informed of the actions taken;

ii)   where applicable, Faculties encourage course/subject teams to improve communication channels with externals;

iii)   taking account of the general points highlighted in the report, Faculties continue to work to achieve consistent application of best practice in assessment and feedback, as well as the fulfilment of University policy particularly in relation to moderation and the assessment of group work;

iv)   Faculties be consulted about the provision of a Commendation band in postgraduate courses and that the Committee discuss this matter at its next meeting.

COMBINED STUDIES PROGRAMME

14.145 Chief External Examiners' Reports 2013/14

Mr McCurry presented the 2013/14 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/14/37a).

All three reports were very positive. It was noted that the review of progress decisions for Sociology candidates at the Magee campus had been referred promptly to the Subject Board, with five candidates being re-coded.

14.146 Annual Report on the Operation and Management of Combined Subjects: 2013/14

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

Professor McKinney questioned whether the classification profile of students taking a combination of subjects was in line with that of Single Honours graduates. In view of the mature state of the modular scheme, the data would be available to support such an analysis. Mr McCurry agreed that the Campus Co-ordinating Groups would compare profiles to ascertain whether there was any significant difference in achievement.

14.147 PRIZES AND AWARDS

The Committee received Paper No LTC/14/38 which set out details of six new prizes and one amended prize for consideration, together with eight new prizes and two amended prizes which had been approved by Chair's action on behalf of the Committee and Council.

New Prizes

Real Estate Excellence Award (Level 4)
Real Estate Excellence Award (Level 5)
Real Estate Excellence Award (Level 6)

Real Estate Excellence Award (Level 7)
Real Estate Placement Award
WYG Prize

<u>Amended Prize</u>

HSBC Prize

<u>New Prizes Approved by Chair's Action</u>

Best MSc Dietetics Student Prize
Best MSc Human Nutrition Student Prize
Best MSc Nutrition Research Presenter Prize
Best MSc Nutrition Research Project Prize
Oonagh Pim Prize
Philip Goodeve-Docker Memorial Prize
James Leckey Design Prize
MBA Association of Ireland Prize

<u>Amended Prizes Approved by Chair's Action</u>

Liberty IT Prize
Institute of Directors' Prize

Duration 2 hours 25 mins

<u>17 December 2014</u>

AGF/CA/lh