ULSTER UNIVERSITY
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FORUM
3 May 2017

Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd May 2017 at Magee Campus.

Present: Professor P Bartholomew, Mr N Blair, Mr L Curran, Ms L Ervine
                     (for Mrs C Davison), Mrs L Lavery, Mrs S McCall,
                     Mrs D McElwee, Mr J Marley, Mrs T Millar, Mrs H Miller,
                     Mrs P Morrison, Dr R Nelson (for Mr D McDowell) Mrs M Paris
                     (Chair), Ms C Reid, Mrs M Sowney.

Apologies: Mrs J Alleyne, Ms N Cameron, Mr J Curran, Mrs C Davison,
                     Mr D McDowell, Dr A Moorhead, Mr P Quinn.

In Attendance: Mr H Deighan, Ms Z Hale, Mrs C McIntyre.

THANKS AND WELCOME

The Chair thanked Dr M Keenan for the professional manner in which she carried
out her duties as Subject Partnership Manager for the Faculty of Art, Design and
the Built Environment and wished her every success on her new role as Associate
Dean (Education), Faculty of Computing and Engineering. The Chair also
welcomed Dr N Blair, the new Subject Partnership Manager for the Faculty of Art,
Design and the Built Environment, to the meeting.

MINUTES

17.21 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2017 were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

17.22 University Entry Requirements (Min 16.63)

The Chair referred to the matter raised by SERC concerning students enrolled on a
Foundation degree who exited the College with a CertHE and enrolled onto a
Honours Degree programme at Ulster University. The University does not normally
make such offers as the CertHE is not specified in the standard offer library.

The Chair confirmed to members that Faculties will not make offers based on a
CertHE unless the student has attained the award and specifies it as a qualification
on their UCAS application form.

NRC referred to anecdotal evidence of students who attended the Biomedical
Sciences Open Day being told they could exit the Foundation degree at the end of
Year 1 and join the Honours degree programme at Ulster. The SPM agreed to
follow this up with the Heads of Faculty Administration.

17.23 Summary of Outcomes from the 2015/16 Annual Course Review (Min 17.17)

The Chair reminded members of two of the outcomes from the 2015/16 annual course review:

i)   where the same course is offered on a number of campuses, a single Self-Evaluation Report (SER) with supporting documentation should be provided. Cohort data could be provided separately in the statistical analysis section of the report.

ii)   all assignments must be returned within 15 working days of submission but it is considered good practice for work to be returned sooner if possible.

17.24 APEL Audit (Min 17.17)

The Chair thanked HE Co-ordinators for providing a copy of their College APEL Policy and supporting documentation. These are currently being reviewed by SPMs.

An audit of APEL for admissions for Year 1 Foundation degree entry in 2016/17 will be undertaken before Colleges break up for the summer. The Chair will write to HE Co-ordinators advising of the arrangements for the audit.

AGREED: i)   that the Chair write to HE Co-ordinators advising of the arrangements for the APEL audit;

ii)   that SPMs agree the method and undertake an APEL audit.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

17.25 Enrolments on Collaborative Courses

The Chair tabled a paper on enrolments for validated courses at recognised institutions from 2011/2012 – 2016/17. It was noted that the number of students enrolled on Foundation degrees has risen from 3411 in 2015/16 to 3746 in 2016/17.

17.26 Associate Colleges

The Partnership Handbook refers to the term Associate College. An institution offering a range of validated and franchised courses may be considered for the title of Associate College of Ulster University.

However, as the University has no agreed criteria for selecting Associate Colleges, and the title has never been granted, the University intends to remove Associate Colleges from Ordinance XXVIII (Recognition of Institutions).

RECOMMENDED: that the title Associate College be removed from Ordinance XXVIII.

17.27 Affiliate Staff

The Chair reminded members of the new arrangements for access to the University Library for Colleges Staff. Staff can apply for library membership directly without having to go through the College HE Co-ordinator. Once the application is approved by the SPM the Library will authorise the creation of a borrower record and the production of a library card. The term of membership is 12 months from approval.

The Chair informed members that the new system appears to be working well.

17.28 Proposed Changes to Provision

The Chair noted that at a meeting of the Academic Planning Advisory Group on 27 February 2017, Professor Bartholomew expressed serious concern that two proposals from partner institutions to change course locations had been presented after the change had taken place.

Members were reminded of the University's requirement that all proposals for course revisions be processed in a timely basis in advance of implementation.

17.29 Collaborative Courses Register

The Chair informed members of ongoing discussions with DfE regarding up to date and accurate information held on Foundation degrees and HLAs. The information held by DfE and partner institutions is significantly different from the official register maintained by the University. The University now has a simplified version of the Collaborative Courses Register showing the course title and the period of approval. This information is publicly available and is the definitive register of courses approved by the University for delivery in partner institutions.

17.30 External Examiner's Form

The Chair informed SPMs that they are responsible for completing the first section of the revised External Examiner's report form.

17.31 Finance for Summer Bridging

Members were informed of an issue at NWRC where a 40-credit point summer bridging module is being introduced from the 2018/19 academic year. Currently students must pay the full bridging fee (approximately £580) at enrolment. The College believes that some students may struggle with this payment and this may prevent them from progressing.

The University's Finance Department is currently looking at ways to reduce the financial burden on students and is waiting on a cost back from the external consultants (STCS) as this will require a change to the current OLE system. Providing the cost is reasonable, the University will set up a recurring card payment (RCP) plan where 50% is collected during OLE and the remaining 50% collected in mid July. If the cost from STCS is excessive and we have to use the percentage already set up in OLE, then those opting to pay in instalments would pay 10% during OLE, 45% in md-July and the balance of 45% in mid-August. Finance would

prefer two instalments instead of three. The normal sanctions will apply for failed RCP collections.

ONLINE ADMISSIONS

17.32 Members considered paper CPF/17/08 from the Working Group looking at the implementation of the online admissions (OLA) pilot.

The existing OLA pilot will continue, and extend to new students on all courses in NWRC in September 2017. The CCU and SPMs will agree the NWRC course list. OLA will open from 29 August 2017. OLA will close at noon on Friday 29 September 2017. The Enrolment stage will close at noon on Friday 6 October 2017.

It is anticipated that OLA be extended to all courses in all partner institutions where possible by September 2018.

Students apply online, ideally on one day, and B numbers will be generated the following day, along with printed application forms which are returned to the College. The College returns the completed forms with payment to Finance by 6 October. Finance carries out a manual count, and forwards forms to the CCU. The hard copy enrolment forms will have GCSE evidence attached and will be stored by the CCU for sampling by Subject Partnership Managers. It is a requirement from 2017 that the enrolment forms must have GCSE evidence attached (English, and maths where appropriate). The 2017 enrolment forms have already been amended to incorporate this requirement.

Any enrolment forms received after noon on 6 October 2017 will necessitate manual entry, and will incur a late enrolment administration fee.

As there is a delay between enrolment and production of ID cards, it has been agreed with the Library and Sports Centre that access will be provided to students who are on the Banner system.

GUIDELINES FOR FAST TRACK PART-TIME FOUNDATION DEGREES

17.33 Members considered paper CPF/17/09 on a set of guidelines for fast track part-time Foundation degrees.

Fast track part-time Foundation degrees comprise 120 credits per calendar year over two full years, where all three semesters are used and are of equal duration.

A fast track student is committed on a weekly basis over two full years to 66% of a full-time programme of study, combined with 80% of a full-time workload, which equates to 146% of full-time commitment.

Members considered a number of issues concerning the current structure and content of fast track Foundation degrees.

I. There should be a clear difference between entry requirements for the full-time, part-time and fast-track applicants. Progression requirements are less flexible for

such students so a higher level of achievement should be set for entry since there is little room for failure. Fast track students can only accommodate 20 credits of failure between years, while full-time and part-time can retake 60 credits before progressing.

II. Any student who has been admitted by the College but does not meet the requirements for entry to fast track should be required to transfer to normal part-time mode, provided they meet the requirements for that mode. This implies that a normal part-time mode has been approved at evaluation/ revalidation.

III. Fast track programmes are based on 120 credits, with 40 credits per teaching semester, where a teaching semester is 12 weeks, followed by one week revision, and two weeks of examinations. This equates to 400 hours' study over 12 weeks. This in turn equates to approximately 33 hours per week, and hence 16.5 hours per 20-credit module. Of these 16 hours, depending on the subject, 3-4 hours will be contact time, and 12-13 hours will be independent learning. In such cases, it would be possible to deliver these contact hours in one day. However, for many subjects, and particularly STEM, for these 16 hours, 5-6 hours will be contact time, and 10-11 hours will be independent learning. As fast track students take 40 credits per semester, this entails 10-12 hours' contact time per week, and 20-22 hours' independent learning per week. Some subjects will have lower contact hours per module, but the overall expectation of hours remains the same.

It is not possible, nor is it acceptable, to deliver 10-12 hours contact time in one day.

IV. There is an additional complication for students on Higher Level Apprenticeships, who are in full-time employment with day release for off-the-job training, which normally means 9-5 or 9-6 one day a week in the college (generally it should align with the working day they agree with their employers). Apprentices usually work for at least 30 paid hours a week and must work more than 16. Employers must pay an apprentice for time spent training or studying for a relevant qualification, whether while at work or at a college or training organisation. Most apprentices work a 7.5-hour day, with 20 minutes' minimum break, hence 9-5, 4 days a week. Young workers are restricted to 8 hours a day, with no more than 40 hours a week in employment. The Working Time Regulations set a limit of 48 hours per week for other workers. If we take the 30 hours on-the-job training and add the 33 hours off-the-job training, we are past the working time regulations, and well past the limit for younger workers.

Currently, Higher Level Apprentices study on day release. For courses with in excess of 7 contact hours per week, it is not possible to satisfy the contact hours' requirement for the volume of 40 credits per semester on day release; nor does it leave sufficient time for independent learning, especially when combined with working four days a week.

V. As the fast track mode includes semester 3 teaching at a time when most college staff are on annual leave, the University needs to be satisfied that full resources are in place to support students over this semester.

VI. Work-based learning modules are an additional problem: normally this module comes at the end of the Foundation Degree, when the student has acquired enough skills to move into the workplace. For fast track students, there is an expectation

that they are in work from the start of the course, so there is a risk that they will receive marks for simply turning up for work.

VII. Apprentices are an employee-student hybrid. There needs to be very dedicated attention paid to *both* the academic and employment supervision and support provided to the student. In discussing entry requirements, members were informed that the existing APL arrangements would continue as before with staff assessing the depth and breadth of applicant's experience. It was noted that HLAs can range from 24 to 36 months. Members were advised to be cognisant of the Working Time Regulations which governs the maximum number of hours students can be engaged on work, study and on-the-job training.

Consideration should also be given to the term' fast track' as this implies that the programme can be completed quickly but does not take account of the intensity of the programme, or the time commitments required by students.

Members agreed the following principles which should be adopted when developing new fast track part-time Foundation degrees or when reviewing existing Foundation degrees at revalidation.

1. The fast track entry requirements should be the same as, or no less than one grade below those for normal year 1 undergraduate entry.

2. No fast track Foundation Degree should be put forward for approval without a corresponding part-time mode offered for consideration by the University.

3. A specific separate business case should be presented at evaluation/ revalidation for the fast track mode where fast track is a requirement of the funding model.

4. Where existing fast track courses are presented for revalidation, proposers must provide evidence that they comply with the agreed benchmarks set by the University for retention and progression.

5. No level 4 module should be greater than 20 credit points, given the less flexible progression requirements.

6. Fast-track Foundation Degrees must, therefore, present for approval a weekly timetable setting out expectations for on-the-job and off-the-job training for *each* semester for *each* year, in order for the University to assess whether this aligns with reasonable working time regulations.

7. The maximum timetabled contact hours in any one day should not exceed 7 (based on a 8-hour day with breaks).

8. Where required contact hours are in excess of 7 per week, the University will require two-day release delivery of the programme.

9. A teaching and resource plan for semester three in both years should be presented for approval to ensure that appropriate staff are engaged in teaching and that mechanisms such as access to the Course Director, the Studies Advisor, and EC1 processes inter alia are all in place, and that students have access to library resources and IT support at the same levels as they would have for semesters 1

and 2. The College will be required to complete a template addressing these resources as part of the proposal.

10. An assessment exemplar focussing on the project element of the work-based learning module should be presented at evaluation/ revalidation.

11. Mechanisms for the mentoring and training of employers/ work-based learning supervisors, as well as ongoing monitoring must be explicitly addressed in the course documentation at approval stage.

> Agreed: i)   that the above principles be included in the Partnership Handbook;
>   ii)   SPMs to ensure that if an existing programme is offered in full-time mode only that a normal part-time route be developed and approved.
>   iii)   that further consideration be given to the term 'fast track'.

REVISED ANNUAL COURSE REVIEW FORMS

17.34   Members received papers CPF/17/10 and CPF/17/11, the revised forms to be used in the 2016/17 annual course review. Members had been consulted with regard to any revisions required to the documentation.

With regard to the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) the Chair noted that the key revisions this year:

i)   Evidence that the external examiner and SPM reports have been responded to. This can be evidenced by providing the covering letter or e-mail which accompanies the response;

ii)   A composite report where a programme is offered across a number of campuses;

iii)   Additional information required on APEL.

SPMs were also reminded that they must track student enrolment and comment in their report on actual student numbers against agreed maximum enrolments.

HE Co-ordinators were informed that the University is introducing a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) system for the 2016/17 review. It is anticipated that the vast majority of programmes will receive a green flag. However, programmes with a number of standards assurance or quality issues will be coded amber and will require a more detailed response from course teams on the actions proposed to address issues identified. Those courses who do not provide a submission or where serious standard assurance issues or a significant number of quality issues are identified, will be coded red and referred to senior management within the partner institution.

FEES FOR ACCESS TO HE DIPLOMAS

17.35   Members considered paper CPF/17/12 on the fees charged by Colleges to students studying on Access Diplomas.

The course team on the Access Diploma Computing, Business and Multimedia at BMC had understood that the fees charged by Ulster University were greater than

the fees charged by QUB for similar provision. The SPM was asked to investigate and report back through the Forum.

Fees for Access Diplomas are set by individual Colleges. A per capita is charged by the University per student. The University has no control over the fees which the Colleges set.

It was noted that in all but one College, no fee is payable for full-time Access programmes. Fees for part-time study range from £378-£492 per year.

BMC reported that they are currently reviewing Access provision within the College; and this will include a review of fees.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

17.36 Members considered paper CPF/17/13 on upcoming staff development events.

The annual Chairing of Boards of Examiners event will be held on the morning of Thursday 11th May 2017 at Jordanstown. All staff who will be chairing Boards of Examiners this June must have attended the training.

The annual conference at CAFRE for staff teaching on higher education programmes approved by Ulster University will be held on Friday 20 October 2017. The theme this year will be Curriculum Design. The keynote speaker will be Professor Bartholomew, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) who will provide an update on changes to the curriculum design process at Ulster University. This will be of particular interest to course teams with new programme proposals coming forward or with subjects due for revalidation.

HE Co-ordinators were asked to forward details of good practice within their institution they would like to showcase at the event.

MARKETING WORKING GROUP

17.37 In the absence of Mr Quinn the Chair provided a verbal update on current marketing activity.

- All colleges will be sent details regarding September Open Days and registration details by the end of May.
- All colleges will be sent information regarding results and advice day details by the middle of June, in addition the link to where all web content will be published.
- Communication and presentations to all first and second year associate students will continue.
- Video content has been completed, however, we would like more. We are working with identify several additional students who have progressed through the foundation route for video testimonial content.
- Colleges were invited to attend the Career Teacher Annual Conference in April.

- The associate student section of the website has been fully updated and will continue to be updated during the year. (https://www.ulster.ac.uk/ulster-life/study-at-ulster/associate-students).
- All colleges have now been provided access to Edlink, our career teacher portal, with all details and content published on the news section.
- Update on progression routes are required to update and content on the landing page.

MATTERS ARISING FROM INFORMATION PAPERS

17.38 Members received information papers from SPMs and HE Co-ordinators on matters relating to collaborative activity.

The papers were taken as read.

Duration: 1 hr 50 mins

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ACTION SHEET

	MINUTE	ACTION	ACTION BY	DEADLINE
1	17.24	i) that the Chair write to HE Co-ordinators advising of the arrangements for the APEL audit; ii) that SPMs agree the method and undertake an APEL audit.	Mrs M Paris SPMs	19/5/17 30/6/17
2	17.26	that the title Associate College be removed from Ordinance XXVIII	Mr H Deighan	30/6/17
3	17.33	i) that the above principles be included in the Partnership Handbook; ii) SPMs to ensure that if an existing programme is offered in fast-track mode only that a normal part-time route be developed and approved. iii) that further consideration be given to the term 'fast track'.	Mrs M Paris SPMs Chair/Mr H Deighan	30/6/17 On-going 31/5/17