

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/19/16a

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

17 June 2019

Agenda Item 7a

DEPARTURES AND VARIATIONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S REGULATORY
FRAMEWORK: FdSc Integrative Counselling Practice (Part-time)

COVER SHEET

Presenter: Professor R Fee

Action is required of the Committee as indicated below.

To consider a request from the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences regarding a variation to regulations concerning exit award titles.

This request has been approved by the Associate Dean (Education) on behalf of the Faculty.

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

FdSc in Integrative Counselling Practice (Part-time)

Background

The above provision was revalidated on 27th March 2019 with the final award title receiving approval to change from FdSc in *Counselling* to FdSc in *Integrative Counselling Practice*. The title of the CertHE exit award, *Counselling Studies*, remained unchanged. As this title differs from the primary award contrary to University regulations, approval is sought from the Committee to depart from the normal regulation in this area.

Proposed Variation: Approval for the CertHE exit award to be titled '*Counselling Studies*'.

Rationale: The following outlines the rationale for the proposed variation.

The FdSc Integrative Counselling Practice is a professionally endorsed programme which prepares students for professional practice in the field of adult counselling. The title of the programme was changed during revalidation to reflect its integrative model and practice-facing nature, distinguishing the Foundation degree from competing Level 5 Counselling programmes which are currently impacting recruitment in some parts of Northern Ireland (NI).

The programme comprises 240 credits at Levels 4 and 5 with 100 hours of assessed practice experience at level 5 gained in placement between Semester 2, year 2 and across year 3. Practice skills are developed alongside five taught modules (120 credits at L5). The assessed practice experience and education at Level 5 is an essential aspect of preparing students to have the competencies, attributes and skills required to work professionally as a counsellor.

Students who choose to exit after completing 120 credits at Level 4 will not have undertaken any of the assessed practice elements and would therefore be unprepared for a professional role as a practicing counsellor.

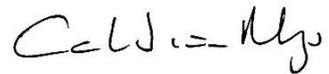
Since counselling is currently unregulated, it is important that employers are able to distinguish between an award which is recognised as having assessed a student's capacity to practice in the counselling field and those who have some academic understanding of the key concepts, models and skills but are not deemed capable to practice by the University. Titling the Certificate of Higher Education exit award *Counselling Studies* provides a clear and important differentiation from the new Foundation degree title in which the *practice* element is deliberately emphasised.

This approach is supported by industry stakeholders in NI, the Subject Network and professional bodies, and reflects the approach taken in other cognate programmes. The proposed variation is in common with the approach taken in other aligned professions such as Community Youth Work and Social Work.



Paula Brogan

Dr Paula Brogan
Faculty Partnership Manager Date: 7th April 2019



Catrin Rhys

Dr Catrin Rhys
Head of School Date: 15th April 2019



Ruth Fee

Professor Ruth Fee
Associate Dean (Education) Date: 19th April 2019