EXTRACT FROM TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE MINUTES: 20.6.12

12.66 PROPOSED POSTGRADUATE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Ms Alexander presented a paper on the proposed Postgraduate CPD Framework (TLC/12/14).

The Committee noted that the Educational Partnerships and International Affairs Committee had set up a Working Group to develop the framework and had approved the full report and the piloting of the scheme in 2012/13. This paper highlighted the matters relating to academic governance and regulations which were within the remit of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

The Framework aimed to widen access to postgraduate level study by providing flexible learning opportunities for the professional postgraduate CPD market. All modules could be taken on a stand-alone basis with credit accumulated towards the Postgraduate Certificate (requiring 60 credits). The academic governance and programme management arrangements were modelled on the undergraduate Certificate of Personal and Professional Development. A degree entry standard was set and all modules were to be at level 7. Existing modules might be used. It was noted that it was not at present proposed to extend the qualification to Postgraduate Diploma or Master’s degree.

AGREED that:

1. the academic governance framework be approved;
2. it be recommended to Senate that the regulations for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development be approved;
3. regulations 1, 8 and 10 of the Regulations Governing Examinations in Programmes of Study be revised to add reference to the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

20 June 2012

PROPOSED POSTGRADUATE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

1 ESTABLISHMENT AND PROGRESS OF POSTGRADUATE CPD WORKING GROUP

Educational Partnerships and International Affairs Committee (EP&IAC) on 20 October 2011 recommended that a Working Group be established to take forward the development of a Postgraduate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework.

Nominations were sought from Deans and Heads of Department and the membership and Terms of Reference of the Working Group have been approved.

The Working Group has met on three occasions in 2012 and has undertaken research with both graduates and employers to establish a market for the Framework. Having identified that there is a market for flexible professional development at postgraduate level, the Group has agreed that any marketing of the Postgraduate CPD Framework is to be aligned with the University’s planned marketing of part-time activity in August 2012.

2 RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE POSTGRADUATE CPD FRAMEWORK

The rationale for and purpose of the Postgraduate CPD Framework is to widen access to postgraduate level study by providing flexible learning opportunities for the professional postgraduate CPD market.

The Framework enables participants to choose modules across all Faculties which meet the specific skills they need to develop for career progression and enhancement of professional practice and build these toward a postgraduate qualification, tailored to their professional needs. As modules can be taken on a standalone basis with credit accumulated towards the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development (requires 60 credits), participants can base their level of progression around affordability and other time commitments.

In addition, such a Framework raises awareness of and maximises recruitment to existing postgraduate provision.

3 ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT OF THE POSTGRADUATE CPD FRAMEWORK

The academic governance and programme management arrangements for the Postgraduate CPD Framework are modelled on the existing undergraduate CPPD Framework i.e. the Framework will be managed centrally by Access and Distributed Learning to minimise the administrative burden on Faculties.

The Postgraduate CPD Working Group has recommended that:

* A Postgraduate CPD Certificate (Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development) is available for students who successfully complete modules within the Framework to a value of 60 credit points.
* The Framework does not (at present) extend to a Postgraduate Diploma or a Master’s degree. As such, further study can be accommodated within existing or new named awards i.e. where the 60 credits within the Framework cover the same content as in the first stage of a Postgraduate Diploma, students only need a further 60 points to achieve the Diploma award.
* The formal restrictions on APL do not apply as students do not register for the award until they have completed 60 credits’ worth of modules.
* All modules offered on the Postgraduate CPD Framework should be at Level 7.
* A degree entry standard (together with competence in English language) is set for the Postgraduate CPD Framework.

The academic governance arrangements and regulations for the award of Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development are available in Appendix 1.

4 PILOT OF THE POSTGRADUATE CPD FRAMEWORK

The Postgraduate CPD Working Group is now seeking approval of the academic governance arrangements for a Postgraduate CPD Framework as well as the regulations for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development available through the Framework in order to proceed with a pilot of the Framework in September 2012.

**APPENDIX: Postgraduate CPD Framework – Academic Governance and Regulations**

**POSTGRADUATE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. CONTEXT

The rationale for and purpose of the Postgraduate Professional Development Framework is to widen access to postgraduate level study by providing flexible learning opportunities for the professional postgraduate CPD market.

The Framework enables participants to choose modules across all Faculties which meet the specific skills they need to develop and build these toward a postgraduate qualification, tailored to their professional needs. As modules can be taken on a standalone basis with credit accumulated towards the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development, participants can base their level of progression around affordability and other time commitments.

In addition, such a Framework raises awareness of and maximises recruitment to existing postgraduate provision.

The following Framework for the academic governance of a Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development is modelled on that of the undergraduate Certificate of Personal and Professional Development.

2 REGULATIONS

The regulations for the award available through the Framework are attached for information (Annex).

(a) Qualification

A Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development is available for students who successfully complete modules within the Framework to a value of 60 credit points.

The new Framework should not disrupt existing provision. The Framework does not, therefore, extend to a Postgraduate Diploma or a Master’s degree, as such further study can be accommodated within existing or new named awards.

(b) Admission

In view of the Master’s level of the study involved, a degree entry standard (together with competence in English language) is set for the Postgraduate Framework[[1]](#footnote-1).

The formal restrictions on APL do not apply as students do not register for the award until they have completed 60 credits’ worth of modules.

(c) Modules

The Postgraduate Framework allows only modules at Level 7. In order to maintain the ethos of the qualification, modules at level 6 (20 credit points permitted within the general regulations for postgraduate certificates), are not permitted within the Postgraduate Framework.

The modules which may contribute to the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development award are approved by Faculties and notified to Access and Distributed Learning, which is responsible for managing and quality assuring the Postgraduate Framework. It ensures that only appropriate modules are added. Existing modules within postgraduate taught courses may be proposed within the Postgraduate Framework[[2]](#footnote-2).

All modules associated with the Postgraduate Framework will carry a ‘PPD’ prefix apart from existing modules on other award-bearing courses. (The PPD prefix is also used within the undergraduate framework.)

Modules within the Postgraduate Framework are allowed to be of 5 credit points as well as standard sizes. (Modules within award-bearing courses have a minimum size of 10 credit points.)

Coherent suites of modules (of 60 points) should be proposed as separate award-bearing courses, which may not include 5 point modules, and are not permitted for inclusion in the Postgraduate Framework.

(d) Examination and Assessment

The pass mark is set at 50%, the standard used in postgraduate awards.

(e) Final Award

No summary classification is made as there is no expectation of integration between the modules. Only a single generic award is available. Specialisms are not recorded on the award parchment[[3]](#footnote-3).

3 MANAGEMENT

The Postgraduate Framework is overseen by a Programme Committee[[4]](#footnote-4) (with similar terms of reference to a course committee) and comprising six Faculty representatives, the Director of Access and Distributed Learning, and, at the discretion of the Accredited Professional Development Management Board, a Students’ Union representative and other co-opted individuals involved in teaching and assessment of students. The Committee is led by a Programme Director[[5]](#footnote-5), the Head of Lifelong Learning in ADL, Ms A Scanlon.

The Programme Committee reports to a Management Committee within ADL which also has oversight of the CPPD and two award-bearing programmes which are the responsibility of non-academic departments, under special academic governance arrangements approved by Senate in 2009 (revised 2010). The Management Committee reports to the Accredited Professional Development Management Board which functions as a quasi-Faculty Board. The Management Board reports directly to Senate. The Programme Committee provides an annual report to Teaching and Learning Committee (through the APDM Board).

4 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF MODULES

Modules are subject to Faculty processes for scrutiny, approval and annual monitoring.

The CA3 process is used to include new modules in the Postgraduate Framework (a CA9 is used for credit-bearing short courses which are not part of it).

5 STUDENT EXAMINING AND BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

Each module is assigned to an appropriate taught course external examiner. Particular Boards of Examiners consider results from modules, with Faculty CPD co-ordinators supervising the activity. (Successful students are coded: ‘completion of period of study – no University award’.)

There is a final, separate Board of Examiners for students who have accumulated 60 credits and are eligible for the Postgraduate Certificate. A ‘chief’ External Examiner is involved for overall award decisions – the arrangement is similar to that for Combined Honours degrees. (Results in individual modules are sent to the Programme Director. ADL monitors progress towards the final award.)

The Award Board comprises the External Examiner for the award, the Programme Director and the six Faculty representatives on the Programme Committee.

6 STUDENT EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Modules are included in the Module Monitoring System (statistical-based review to identify outliers) and the Student Survey on the Quality of Teaching, the University’s 16 point questionnaire. Modules may also adopt a generic form of evaluation used by some BbLearn hosted modules or other forms of evaluation and feedback.

In addition, ADL surveys current students periodically and those who have completed in the manner of the NSS.

7 STUDIES ADVICE AND ACCESS TO SUPPORT AND FACILITIES

Students are Occasional Students, so there is no formal requirement for assignment of Advisers of Studies. Module Co-ordinators are the primary source of support and Faculty Co-ordinators and the Programme Director provide award-level advice.

Library regulations set out the entitlements of occasional students. Their loan quota is eight items, compared to 12 for registered postgraduate students.

Access to electronic resources is covered under existing rules.

Access to other support services, Student Support, Career Development Centre, Sports Centre, is as applies for occasional students.

Membership of the Students’ Union is not automatic. Ordinance XLI provides for ‘Associate Membership’ upon receipt of a fee as set out in the Union’s constitution.

26 April 2012

AGF/lh

ANNEX

**Regulations for the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development**

(Charter Art. 5(E): Statute II: Ordinance XXXI)

1 The University awards the Postgraduate Certificate of Personal and Professional Development to candidates who have successfully completed the requisite number of modules approved within the framework for the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development and who have satisfied the conditions specified in Ordinance XXXI.

**Admission Requirements**

2 Candidates for the award must:

(a) have gained

1. an Honours or non-Honours degree from a University of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland, from the Council for National Academic Awards, the National Council for Educational Awards, or the Higher Education and Training Awards Council or from an institution of another country which is recognised as being of an equivalent standard; or
2. an equivalent standard in a Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma or an approved alternative qualification;

and

(b) provide evidence of competence in written and spoken English (GCSE grade C or equivalent);

or as an alternative to (a) (i) or (a) (ii) and/or (b):

(c) in exceptional circumstances, where an individual has substantial and significant experiential learning, a portfolio of written evidence demonstrating the meeting of graduate qualities may be considered as an alternative entrance route.

Conditions for entry may be specified for specific modules.

**Modules**

3 Modules at level 7 only shall contribute to the framework. The specific modules which shall contribute to the framework shall be approved by faculties and the Access and Distributed Learning Division.

**Examination and assessment**

4 Candidates shall be assessed in modules:

(a) by examination; or

(b) by coursework; or

(c) by a combination of the methods in (a) and (b).

At the discretion of the Board of Examiners, candidates may be required to attend a viva voce examination.

5 The detailed assessment requirements shall be set out in module descriptions which shall specify:

(a) the method of assessment; and

(b) the distribution of marks within the module.

6 The performance of candidates shall be assessed by Boards of Examiners in accordance with the Regulations Governing Examinations in Programmes of Study.

7 Where marks are used to grade performance, the pass mark for the module shall be 50%. Where a module is assessed by a combination of coursework and examination a minimum mark of 45% shall be achieved in each element.

**Submission of coursework**

8 Coursework shall be submitted by dates as specified by the module coordinator.

9 Students may seek prior consent to submit coursework after the official deadline; such requests must be accompanied by a satisfactory explanation and in the case of illness, by a medical certificate. This application shall be made to the Module Co-ordinator.

10 Coursework submitted without consent after the deadline shall not normally be accepted.

**Re-examination**

11 Candidates who fail to satisfy the Board of Examiners in assessment may be permitted at the discretion of the Board to re-present themselves for one or more supplementary written examinations and repeat such coursework or other assessment requirements as shall be prescribed by the Board.

12 Where candidates are required to repeat coursework or take a supplementary examination, the original mark in the failed coursework component or examination shall be replaced by a mark of 50%, or the repeat mark, whichever is the lower, for the purposes of calculating the module result.

**Final award**

13 Candidates who have successfully completed modules amounting to 60 credit points shall be eligible for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Development.

14 The award is not classified.

**Illness and other extenuating circumstances**

15 The Board of Examiners may, in the case of candidates who are prevented by illness or other sufficient cause from taking or completing the whole or part of the assessment, or whose results are substantially affected by illness or other sufficient cause:

1. permit the candidates to take, complete or repeat the assessment in one or more modules at an approved subsequent date; or
2. deem the candidates to have passed the assessment and recommend the award of an Aegrotat Postgraduate Certificate.

16 Before an Aegrotat award is recommended a candidate must have indicated that he or she is willing to accept the award.

1. The undergraduate framework has no general entry requirements but these may be specified for individual modules. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This is exceptional in the undergraduate framework. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Faculty name may be recorded in parentheses in the undergraduate Certificate when at least 40 credits are drawn from the one Faculty. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Terms of reference and duties identical to those for the undergraduate Certificate. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Duties identical to those for the undergraduate Certificate. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)