EXTRACT FROM SUB-COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYABILITY TO LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

**May 2018**

(III) Work Based Learning and Placement

A [generic DPP/DPP(i) descriptor](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0003/303528/DDPModuleDescTemplate_May_2018.docx) has been developed to provide uniform module structure whilst facilitating discipline requirements of individual Schools.

Development was anchored by a Task & Finish Group however the overarching approach was one of collegiality and collaborative spirit. Across multiple rounds of consultation contributions were received from over thirty stakeholders with contributions from each Faculty. Primary events and activities:

• Initial review of CMS modules: 13th February

• Ongoing fact-finding, review and workshop design: 13th February – 21st March

• Development Workshop: 21st March (full day)

• Task & Finish Group Activity, Consultation & Debate: 22nd March – 11th April

• Ongoing Consultation (led by T&F members): 11th – 16th April

• Draft to Associate Deans (Education) for final Faculty / School consultation: 16th – 24th April

The proposed descriptor seeks to provide an unambiguous framework for all Professional Practice modules across the Institution whilst still allowing Course Teams to reflect the essence of each discipline.

EXTRACT FROM TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

**18 June 2014**

14.42 Assessment of Placement

The Committee noted that focus groups of placement tutors had considered models for the assessment of the placement year. It was now proposed to have one standard model where a percentage mark would be used for the student project but the academic tutor and industrial supervisor’s reports would be competence-based and graded ‘pass/fail’ only; an exceptional route, requiring the Sub-Committee’s approval, would allow a percentage mark for each component.

Professors McClenaghan and McKillop reported that, in light of the ongoing debate on this matter, there had already been improvements made in the process, including the training and guidance provided for industrial supervisors and that those courses which benefited from close collaboration with industry, including involvement in assessment judgements, should not be obliged to overcome an additional approval hurdle. The Chair suggested that both models could be adopted as standard and that only other variants should require justification either to an evaluation/revalidation panel for recommendation to the Learning and Teaching Committee or directly to the Committee.

The Committee considered the further proposal from the Sub-Committee that the award mark for the Diploma in Professional Practice/(International) be lowered to 40% in line with other undergraduate awards and that a Distinction be introduced (70%) and that the mark for Commendation be set at 60%. Currently a 50% standard was applied for the award, with students being permitted to progress to final year at 40%. The Committee endorsed the alignment, but did not accept a proposal to amend the wording of regulations to permit Boards of Examiners to allow students who had failed the placement year to progress to final year. It was noted that other mechanisms were already in place for exceptional circumstances such as non-availability and this could be extended to address early termination through redundancy.

AGREED that with effect from placement year 2015/16:

1. the two models for assessment of the placement year be adopted, and that any proposed alternatives required consideration by validation panels if appropriate to the timing of the proposal, and the Committee;
2. it be recommended to Senate that the award mark for the Diploma in Professional Practice/(International) be lowered to 40% and a Distinction be introduced at 70%, with the Commendation mark revised to 60% and that the regulations for the award be revised accordingly;
3. Faculties ensure that they revise course regulations and information to students, industrial supervisors and staff to reflect any changes which apply;
4. Faculties ensure that any professional body threshold standard be maintained in the assessment criteria for the 40% award mark.

**27 March 2013**

* 1. Assessment of Placement (Item 1ii)

The Committee noted that a working group from the Ulster Business School had considered the implementation of the new grade-based assessment scheme for placement, in particular the implications of the grading grid. The Faculty was concerned that its analysis of a sample of programmes revealed that the new model was likely to reduce significantly the number of students achieving the new highest grade (Distinction) compared to those achieving the highest grade (Commendation) in the current scheme. The Faculty, therefore, proposed a reduced weighting for the employer’s and academic supervisor’s reports, which departed from a previously approved standard placement module description. The Committee noted that, while producing more Distinctions, by the same analysis this also compared unfavourably with the existing arrangement.

Members reported that the change from percentage marks had given rise to significant concerns in many course committees/schools and they were not convinced that the new model was appropriate and considered that the previous decision may need to be revoked.

The Chair expressed disquiet that issues were being identified by the Sub-Committee at this late stage following Senate approval. It was noted that a substantial amount of work had already been undertaken by Faculty staff and central departments in preparation for implementation in 2013/14. Committee members shared the Chair’s concern that the implications of the new scheme had not been fully considered at the time it was recommended to it. The Committee was also disappointed that the Sub-Committee had not taken a view on the Ulster Business School’s proposals before referring the matter to it.

AGREED that:

1. it be recommended to Senate that the introduction of the new scheme be delayed and that it not be introduced for the 2013/14 academic year;
2. the Sub-Committee revisit the merits of the grade-based scheme, compared to the mark-based scheme, and report back to the Committee;