

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Thursday 9 April 2009

Report from the Programme Approval Group: Faculties of
Education, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Mr J Craig, Senate Office

Present:

Mr Tom Guthrie (Convener), Dr Sean Johnston, Dr Paul Skett

In attendance:

Mr Jim Craig (Clerk)

By invitation:Mrs Fiona Green (for Faculty of Education proposals), Professor Christine Edwards
(for Faculty of Medicine proposals)Overview of Process

The Group was very impressed by the evidence of the extent to which all three Faculties had conscientiously examined the proposals before submitting documents to the Senate Office. While the present report contains suggestions for the further improvement of most of the Programme Specifications examined by the Group, the Group acknowledges that Faculty committees had given careful consideration to all of the proposals and encouraged members of the Group to report to ASC that the role of the PAG might be confirmed as one of auditor of the prescribed process.

1. FACULTY OF EDUCATION**1.1 POSTGRADUATE PROPOSALS****1.1.1 MSc Community Development (New programme)**

Rationale: Social inclusion and regeneration policies locally, nationally and overseas have created greater employment opportunities in community development in both voluntary and statutory sectors. This programme is intended to attract (primarily part-time) students who are experienced in community development work and who wish to continue their professional education.

Regulations: This programme would be governed by the generic PGT regulations which would require amendment only in the addition of the new programme title under the heading “Faculty of Education” in §11.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and found it well constructed. It suggested only minor alterations as follows:

- Section 16 (Additional relevant information) – The Group noted that the final sentence was incomplete. It suggested that this section should include reference to the availability of the programme for full-time or part-time study and that there existed an expectation that most students would engage on a part-time basis.

Conclusion:

Subject only to the requested adjustments to the Programme Specification, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.

1.1.2 MLitt English Language Studies (Major change)

Rationale: A number of changes are proposed in respect of the structure and content of the MLitt English Educational & Cultural Studies in order to increase its attraction to students based in the partner institution which is identified as Majan College in Oman.

Regulations: This proposal would require only that the new title is substituted for the old in §11 of the PGT generic regulations.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and found it generally well constructed. It requested some minor alterations as follows:

- Section 11 (Intended learning outcomes) – The Group requested that the list of transferable skills be revisited and constructed more in accordance with the guidelines for drafting ILOs. In particular it suggested that the phrasing “students will also develop skills” was inappropriate to a statement of outcomes and that “ability to search and select relevant information and to demonstrate research skills generally” was too vague.
- Section 15 (Programme structure and features) – The Group requested that the references to credits as “points” should be corrected.
- Section 16 (Additional relevant information) - The Group took the view that the first paragraph in this section should not be included in a public document and requested that it be removed, perhaps to be replaced by a simple statement naming and identifying the role of the partner institution.

Conclusion:

The Group was advised by Mrs Green that costings had not yet been completed and that the proposal remained provisional pending a satisfactory conclusion to negotiations with Majan College in Oman. The Group recommends to ASC approval of the proposed major change to the existing programme subject to Senate approval of the arrangements concluded with Majan College, and the requested amendments being made to the Programme Specification.

1.2 *UNDERGRADUATE PROPOSALS*

1.2.1 BEd (Honours) (Major change)

Rationale: The structure of the programme and the Year 1 courses were approved by Senate in 2007-8; the present application is for approval of courses for Year 2.

Regulations: This proposal would require no change to existing regulations.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and found it generally well constructed. It requested minor alteration as follows:

- Section 12 (Assessment methods) - The Group requested that the final line of text (a drafting note) should be deleted.

- Section 15 (Programme structure and features) included descriptions of the contents of Years 1 to 4; the Group suggested that these be reduced to course titles and corresponding credits. The Group also suggested that a statement of progress rules should be added to this section.
- Section 16 (Additional relevant information) included information about exit awards which the Group suggested should be removed to section 15.

Conclusion:

Subject to the requested amendments being made to the Programme Specification, the Group recommends the proposed new programmes to ASC.

Progress:

The amendments to the Programme Specification requested by the Group have now been made.

2. FACULTY OF MEDICINE

2.1 POSTGRADUATE PROPOSALS

2.1.1 MSc (Med Sci) Health Profession Education (New Programme)

Rationale: This programme has been created in response to a perceived need for training in the management of undergraduate and postgraduate education programmes in the medical professions.

Regulations: If approved, the programme will be governed by the Generic Regulations for Taught Masters Degrees.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and requested some alterations as follows:

- Section 1 (Programme title) – It was noted that the formal title of the degree should replace the colloquial version given.
- Section 11 (Intended learning outcomes) - The Group requested that this section be revisited and drafted more in accordance with the guidance provided on the Senate Office web pages. In particular the switch to future conditional ('should') from future indicative ('will') after the *Knowledge and Understanding* sub-section should be reversed. The Group was uncomfortable with the broad statement "Write a masters level critical dissertation" appearing under the sub-heading *Intellectual skills* and thought that specific skills should be identified. It recognised, however, that these may already appear as *Transferable skills*.
- Section 14 (Relevant QAA subject benchmark statements ...) – The Group suggested that, in the absence of appropriate statements, the text supplied should be replaced with 'None'.
- Section 15 (Programme structure and features) – The Group suggested that, under the sub-heading *Key features*, in the description of the third delivery mode, the text "This will provide ... working abroad)." should be deleted.

Points for discussion:

The Group raised the following issues with regard the proposed new programme:

- The Group discussed the prescriptions of dissertation length provided for this and other programmes from the Faculty of Medicine that it had received for consideration. It noted both a variation from one programme to another and that, on the whole, the requirements seemed less than members of the Group might have expected. Professor Edwards explained that the general objective was to encourage students to write concisely and that, among the masters programmes being considered, the research exercise was often quantitative rather than qualitative and a good dissertation was not measured by its length. The Group accepted Professor Edwards' arguments but requested that, where the dissertation was discursive, as it might be expected to be in the case of the Health Profession Education programme, a length of 12,000 to 15,000 words should be prescribed.
- The Group noted the intention that students should not be permitted to progress to the second 60 credit course before they had successfully completed the first course. While the Generic PGT Regulations permitted variation in progress rules, such variation was allowed only where a convincing case for the exception was made to ASC, and such a case was normally associated with the particular requirements of a validating body. Professor Edwards agreed to discuss this issue with colleagues in the proposing department.

Conclusion:

Subject to the requested amendments being made to the Programme Specification, and a satisfactory outcome to further consideration of progress requirements, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.

2.1.2 MRes Translational Medicine (New Programme)

Rationale: The British Heart Foundation Glasgow Cardiovascular Research Centre has received substantial funding from the BHF to support a new PhD programme. It is proposed that students should enter this programme via a generic MRes with rotation through three laboratories to provide them with the skills and understanding they will require for research in translational medicine.

Regulations: The new programme would be governed by the existing regulations for the degree of Master of Research.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and found it generally well constructed. It requested minor alteration as follows:

- Section 14 (Relevant QAA subject benchmark statements ...) – The Group requested that, in the absence of appropriate statements, the text supplied should be replaced with 'None'.
- Section 15 (Programme structure and features) – The Group noted that the table provided did not refer to the formative essay in the 60 credit course which is indicated in section 12 of the Programme Specification. The Group was advised that the table would be amended accordingly

Conclusion:

Subject to the requested amendments being made to the Programme Specification, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.

2.1.3 MSc (Med Sci) Behavioural Sleep Medicine (New Programme)

Rationale: This programme has been designed to meet the needs of health professionals who wish to develop skills in evidence-based practice in behavioural sleep medicine and related audit and research. Its development reflects a growing awareness of the impact of sleep disorders on patients' treatment and recovery from medical and psychological disease.

Regulations: If approved, the programme will be governed by the Generic Regulations for Taught Masters Degrees.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and requested some alterations as follows:

- Section 11 (Intended learning outcomes) - The Group requested that the ILOs be introduced by the future indicative ('will') rather than the future conditional ('should') in accordance with the published guidance. It was concerned also how students might be expected to demonstrate application of "their knowledge of BSM to train and supervise future BSM practitioners." It had similar reservations as to how students might "demonstrate leadership skills and ability to work effectively within a multidisciplinary context."
- Section 14 (Relevant QAA subject benchmark statements ...) – The Group requested that, in the absence of appropriate statements, the text supplied should be replaced with 'None'.
- Section 15 (Programme structure and features) – While the Group recognised the importance of prospective students understanding that the award of the proposed degree would not confer a professional qualification to practice in behavioural sleep medicine, it suggested that the message might be conveyed more positively and that in its revised form it should be removed to section 16 of the Programme Specification.

Points for discussion:

The Group raised the following issue with regard the proposed new programme:

- The Group was uncomfortable with the proposal that a single final examination should be responsible for 70% by weight of the assessment of six courses representing 90 credits. The Programme Specification indicated that the remaining 30% should be provided by six short essays (each about 1,000 words). The burden placed on this comparatively slight assessment regime was made more daunting by the extensive range of ILOs listed in section 11 of the Programme Specification. Professor Edwards agreed to review the proposed assessment arrangements with the colleagues concerned.

Conclusion:

Subject to the requested amendments being made to the Programme Specification and a satisfactory outcome being reached with regard to the arrangements for assessment, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.

2.1.4 MSc (Med Sci) Cardiovascular Sciences (New Programme)

Rationale: The proposed programme is a response to expressions of strong interest from medicine and biological science graduates in the UK and

overseas in this area. It will include courses currently offered to Clinical Pharmacology students.

Regulations: If approved, the programme will be governed by the Generic Regulations for Taught Masters Degrees.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and requested some alterations as follows:

- Section 11 (Intended learning outcomes) - The Group requested that the presentation of the ILOs be brought into closer alignment with the guidance published on the Senate Office web pages, this applying particularly in respect of the statement and first five ILOs under the sub-heading *Knowledge and Understanding*. There following, the future indicative ('will') should be used in preference to the future conditional ('should'). It suggested further that ILO no. 6, concerning "ability to search the literature using relevant search engines and databases and critically evaluate the literature" might be considered a skill rather than an area of knowledge and understanding.
- Section 12 (Assessment methods) – In response to a question from the Group about one of the ILOs, Professor Edwards indicated that students would be given feedback on draft CVs. The Group therefore suggested that a reference to the formative assessment of a written CV should be added to section 12 of the Programme Specification. In this section the matter of dissertation length (discussed in 2.1.1 above) arose and the Group's request that, at least for dissertations which were largely discursive, the range of 12,000 to 15,000 words should apply.
- Section 14 (Relevant QAA subject benchmark statements ...) – The Group requested that, in the absence of appropriate statements, the text supplied should be replaced with 'None'.

Conclusion:

Subject to the requested amendments being made to the programme specification, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.

2.1.5 MSc (Med Sci) Forensic Toxicology (New Programme)

Rationale: With its ISO accredited facility and the experience of its staff, the Faculty's Forensic Medicine and Science Section is very strongly placed to offer a masters level programme.

Regulations: If approved, the programme will be governed by the Generic Regulations for Taught Masters Degrees.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and suggested some alterations as follows:

- Section 11 (Intended learning outcomes) - The Group requested that the presentation of the ILOs be brought into closer alignment with the guidance published on the Senate Office web pages. Outcome statements should employ an active verb and should express what the student will be able to demonstrate on completion of the programme. The fact that the outcomes are intended rather than guaranteed provides condition enough and the hopeful 'shoulds' should be replaced by 'wills'.

- Section 14 (Relevant QAA subject benchmark statements ...) – The Group requested that, in the absence of appropriate statements, the text supplied should be replaced with 'None'.
- Section 15 (Programme structure and features) opens with the instruction "See Section 5.7 of the Guidance Notes ..." which should be deleted. The Group noted also that the project carrying the usual 60 credits is identified as requiring 20 hours per week during semester 3. Given that 60 credits is normally expected to correspond to 600 learning hours, semester 3 would have to consist of 30 weeks to accommodate the project. It is suggested, therefore, that the number of hours per week be deleted.
- Section 16 (Additional relevant information) opens with the instruction "See Section 5.8 of the Guidance Notes ..." which should be deleted.

Conclusion:

Subject to the requested amendments being made to the Programme Specification, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.

2.1.6 Postgraduate Certificate in Healthcare Chaplaincy (New Programme)

Rationale: In June 2008, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) published a framework for a postgraduate certificate for healthcare chaplains. Following a process of national consultation and tendering among Scottish universities, NES commissioned this University's Department of Nursing and Health Care to develop the certificate and to integrate it within its existing MSc (Med Sci) in Health Care.

Regulations: If approved, the programme will be governed by the Generic Regulations for Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and requested some alterations as follows:

- Section 10 (Programme aims) included several bullet points introduced by the statement, "The core aims of the degree of the PG Certificate ..." The Group requested that this should be amended to read, "The core aims of the programme ..." It noted also that the redundant 'to' which appeared at the beginning of the first three bullet points should be removed.
- Section 11 (Intended learning outcomes) – The Group noted that care had been taken to construct ILOs which, on the whole, reflected published guidance but it noted also that some would be difficult or impossible to assess objectively. This was particularly true of those appearing under the sub-heading *Subject specific skills / Practical skills* which the Group considered in need of reworking, perhaps for inclusion in section 10 of the Programme Specification. It requested also that the formulation: "By the end of the programme students will be able to ..." should be used in the introduction to the ILOs.
- Section 14 (Relevant QAA subject benchmark statements ...) – The Group requested that, while the first sentence provided should be retained, the remainder of the text supplied should be deleted.

Points for discussion:

The Group raised the following issue with regard the proposed new programme:

- The Group noted that, although it had received a report of the Faculty's Review Panel for the PG Certificate, this did not refer to the Panel's consideration of comments received from the external academic, the students or the potential employers who had been consulted about the proposed new programme. Professor Edwards indicated that the appropriate minutes would be provided to the Group *via* the Senate Office.

Conclusion:

Subject to the Faculty providing evidence of a satisfactory outcome of consultations with students and others, and to the requested amendments being made to the Programme Specification, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.

2.1.7 Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care (New Programme)

Rationale: The programme for the degree Master of Primary Care underwent major change in 2007-8 and this new postgraduate diploma is offered in response to demand and reflects the content of the masters programme without the research component.

Regulations: If approved, the programme will be governed by the Generic Regulations for Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and found it generally well constructed. It requested some minor alterations as follows:

- Section 11 (Intended learning outcomes) - The Group noted that the opening paragraph would sit more comfortably in section 10 of the Programme Specification but also that it required, in the final sentence, 'degree' to be replaced by 'diploma programme'. The Group requested also that the ILOs be introduced by the future indicative ('will') rather than the future conditional ('should') in accordance with the published guidance.
- Section 14 (Relevant QAA subject benchmark statements ...) – The Group requested that the first sentence, "There are no current ... Medical Faculty." Be deleted.

Conclusion:

Subject to the requested amendments being made to the Programme Specification, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.

2.1.8 MSc (Med Sci) Sport & Exercise Medicine (Distance Learning) (New Programme)

Rationale: The existing programme has been successfully delivered via traditional teaching methods for a number of years and the proposal consists of providing opportunities for study by distance learning. It is anticipated that this provision will attract more students from further afield and those who would like to combine study with continued full-time employment.

Regulations: If approved, the programme will be governed by the Generic Regulations for Taught Masters Degrees.

Programme Specification: Although the report of the Faculty Review Panel referred to the proposal as a proposed 'major change', the Programme Specification presented to the Group addressed the degree by distance learning discretely. It is therefore on the basis of its being a new programme that the Group considered it. The Group requested some minor alterations as follows:

- Section 1 (Programme title) – The Group noted that 'and', and 'Sports' had been used rather than '&' and 'Sport' which appear in the title of the original degree in the Calendar and on the Faculty's own web pages.
- Section 11 (Intended learning outcomes) - The Group requested that the ILOs be introduced by the future indicative ('will') rather than the future conditional ('should') in accordance with the published guidance. It requested also that the ILOs which appeared first under the sub-heading *Knowledge and understanding*, because they explicitly consisted of interpretation, should be categorised as skills.
- Section 14 (Relevant QAA subject benchmark statements ...) – The Group requested that the first sentence, "There are no current ... Medical Faculty." Be deleted.
- Section 16 (Additional relevant information) – The Group requested that, in the second sentence of the first paragraph, "and the Joint Universities of Glasgow diploma and MSc" should be deleted.

Conclusion:

Subject to the requested amendments being made to the Programme Specification, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.

2.1.9 MSc (Med Sci) Human Nutrition (Major Change)

Rationale: The programme has been running for ten years and attracts 25 – 30 students a year. It is proposed that the number of optional specialist courses be increased with the addition of one on Obesity and Weight Management. At the same time, some changes to two of the existing courses are proposed. These changes reflect a growing need for suitably qualified nutritionists, especially in the areas of public health and sports and exercise nutrition.

Regulations: No change to existing regulations is required.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and requested some minor alterations as follows:

- Section 11 (Intended learning outcomes) - The Group requested that the ILOs be introduced by the future indicative ('will') rather than the future conditional ('should') in accordance with the published guidance. It requested also that they be reviewed to ensure that statements were syntactically correct. The Group noted that problems were particularly apparent under the sub-headings *Intellectual skills* and *Transferable skills*.
- Section 14 (Relevant QAA subject benchmark statements ...) – The Group requested that, in the absence of appropriate statements, the text supplied should be replaced with 'None'.

Conclusion:

Subject to the requested amendments being made to the Programme Specification, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.

3. FACULTY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

3.1 UNDERGRADUATE PROPOSALS

3.1.1 Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (Major change)

Rationale: The present Year 1 programme consists of a single course introducing the four subjects which, in Year 2 are taught in four discrete courses. It is proposed that the composite Year 1 course be broken down in the same way with discrete courses in Anatomy, Physiology, Veterinary Animal Husbandry, and Veterinary Biomolecular Sciences.

Regulations: This proposal would require no change to existing regulations.

Programme Specification: The Group recognised that the Programme Specification would have required change only in respect of the formal structure of Year 1 but submission of the proposal afforded opportunity for review of the document as a whole and the Group considered that amendment as indicated below was required.

- Section 11 (Intended learning outcomes) – The Group took the view that the ILOs should be redrafted so as to reflect more closely the guidance published on the Senate Office web pages. If the document is to conform to the general standard it should not indicate that the relevant programme provides students with opportunities for learning but should state what, on completion of the programme, students will be able to do. If the ILOs are reviewed in the context of the guidance it will be apparent also that some do not convey a clear description of what students may expect to learn.

Conclusion:

The Group recommends the proposed change to the BVMS programme to ASC and suggests that the opportunity be taken to ask the Faculty to bring the Programme Specification's statement of ILOs into line with the approved standard.