

## University of Glasgow

## Academic Standards Committee - 9 October 2009

**Scottish Agricultural College: Report in Response to the Validation  
Report of Pg Cert/Pg Dip/MSc Applied Poultry Science**

Rona Miller, Senate Office

The validation Panel set four conditions and made a number of recommendations at the event held at SAC Ayr on 19 March 2009. These were set out in Section 5 of the Validation Report. This document explains how the development team will meet the conditions and how it will address the recommendations. Paragraph numbers below refer to those in the report.

<b>Conditions</b>	
5.3.1	That the team review the assessment regime for the programme to ensure an equitable assessment load and consistency across modules, and as a result of this include in the document a tabulated summary of the assessments planned for each module. [4.4.1]
<b>Response</b>	
Assessment across all the modules for the programme was revisited at a meeting of module leaders. It was agreed that generally assessment would be covered 50% by course work and 50% by examination and that course work would consist of 2 1500 word essay type questions or the equivalent if assessed by other than an essay. In the case of <i>Experimental design, data analysis and interpretation</i> assessment would be covered entirely by coursework (100%) and the <i>Advanced Nutrition</i> coursework would cover 60% of the assessment comprising a diet formulation assignment; using information on dietary ingredients for commercial production and a calculation of nutrient balances and digestibility coefficients from data supplied. This has been updated in the module descriptors. This is detailed in Table 14 of the validation document.	
5.3.2	That the team review all the reading lists in the module descriptors and update them as necessary. [4.5.4]
<b>Response</b>	
Module leaders have updated reading lists as necessary and this has been updated in the module descriptors	
5.3.3	That the team augment the <i>MSc project and dissertation</i> descriptor to give more information about what the project and dissertation would entail and what would be expected of the students in completing a Masters level piece of work. 4.5.4]

## **Response**

The module descriptor for the project and dissertation has been rewritten to include the following learning outcomes and content.

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the conclusion of this module, the student will be able to:

- (a) Plan and carry out an original investigation of a topic appropriate to applied poultry science, setting objectives and milestones for self study.
- (b) Source, critically appraise and summarise relevant literature.
- (c) Using appropriate methodology carry out original investigation.
- (d) Analyse and evaluate investigation findings (using statistical tests as appropriate).
- (e) Present a written dissertation of research findings.
- (f) Give an oral presentation of the project.

### **Content**

The student will select an appropriate topic in consultation with the project leader and the supervisor. Students can take this opportunity to develop an idea of particular interest to them or to pursue a subject area which will be of direct use in their chosen career path. The project must have a hypothesis which can be tested and must be of a standard suitable for publication in a peer reviewed journal. It must also meet the requirements for Home Office and the SAC animal ethics committee.

In most cases, the dissertation comprises an introduction which discusses the problem and reviews the literature, and an evaluation of the results of an investigation. The relative proportions of these elements may vary and will depend upon the requirements of the subject and on available resources. It will not always be possible for students to be involved in the collection of the information on which they will report, analyse and evaluate. It is considered desirable, however, that the student should have some practical involvement with the project.

The structure of the dissertation may vary depending on the nature of the project and the objective of the study. A typical dissertation will contain an introduction and review of the relevant literature, an explanation of methods used in the work, a description and analysis of the results obtained, and a discussion of the significance and relevance of these findings. In other cases project work may include a survey. The dissertation structure will need to reflect the investigative approach. In each case, however, the dissertation is expected to include an evaluation, interpretation and manipulation of information relevant to achieving a particular objective or objectives.

5.3.4	That the team ensure that any pre-requisite modules are clearly identified and the re-assessment regulations clarified. [4.7.1]
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**Response**

[4.2]

Pre-requisite modules.

There are 2 pre-requisite modules for students wishing to complete the MSc:

1. As the *Advanced Nutrition* module has been designed to dovetail closely with the *Nutrition and Growth* module the latter is seen as a necessary pre-requisite for taking the *Advanced Nutrition* module. Students wishing to go on and study the *Advanced Nutrition* module as part of the PG Dip must successfully complete the *Nutrition and Growth* module at grade D or above.

2. In order to progress to the *Project and Dissertation* module students must pass the *Experimental Design, Data Analysis and Interpretation* module at Grade D or above. Results from the *Experimental Design, Data Analysis and Interpretation* module will be made available before students start planning their project and dissertation.

Reassessment regulations will follow Glasgow University Guidelines for reassessment and will be included in the student handbook

**Recommendations**

5.4.1	That the team consider setting up a suitable mechanism for recording for subsequent discussion and action the outcomes of discussions between members of the teaching team and industry. [4.1]
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**Response**

A proforma for recording contact with industry has been circulated by the Programme Leader to all involved in delivery of the course

5.4.2	That one member of the teaching team should have responsibility for marketing and recruitment. [4.2]
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**Response**

This is being undertaken by the Programme Leader

5.4.3	That the Programme Leader, or nominee, take on the role of monitoring the quality of the module material on Blackboard. [4.3.1]
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**Response**

A training course in preparation of information to be uploaded onto Blackboard was held in early June in order to standardize material available for the programme. This was available to all module leaders.

5.4.4	That the validation document and the programme handbook include a clear timetable for the process of choosing project topics, with the final deadline by which choices have to be made clearly indicated. [4.5.1]
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<b>Response</b> [section 5.1.2] Suggested project titles as well as lists of staff and their research interests are circulated to students wishing to proceed to MSc as soon as the results from the <i>Experimental design, data analysis and interpretation</i> module are available (January). Students are encouraged to devise their own project or join in an existing research programme. A project proposal produced in conjunction with the Project Supervisor should be handed to the Programme Leader as soon as possible. The Programme Leader will confirm acceptance of the project proposal and students will prepare a brief plan of the work and the milestones needed to complete the project by June.	
5.4.5	That the team identify areas of overlap between modules in order that the teachers concerned could determine the emphasis that should be placed on these areas in each of the modules concerned, with a view to avoiding repetition and to integrating the curriculum. Students could then be given information about how overlap was being managed constructively. [4.5.2]
<b>Response</b>  Areas of overlap between have been identified and highlighted to module leaders before final preparation of teaching material in order to achieve full integration of information delivered to the students. Information is given in Table 8 in the validation document.	
5.4.6	That the team clarify in the document the range of environmental issues dealt with in the programme. [4.5.3]
<b>Response</b> This is now included in an updated table in the validation document Table 13.	
5.4.7	That the <i>Data analysis</i> module be re-titled <i>Experimental design, data analysis and interpretation</i> to better reflect the content. [4.5.4]
<b>Response</b>  This has been updated in the module descriptor.	
5.4.8	That the team clarify the practical support that students would receive in conducting the MSc project. [4.6.1]

**Response**

The Validation document has been updated as follows [section 5.1.2]:

Project supervisors are normally from SAC. However, projects may be performed away from Auchincruive as long as the Core Team is satisfied that adequate supervision and resources are available.

Students are expected to contribute to the planning of the project. In some cases the initial planning may have been done because the project is part of a larger, on-going research plan. However, students are expected to contribute to the development of the project and suggest ideas as the work progresses.

Students are expected to carry out all experimental work and will receive the necessary training as required. The supervisor will assess student performance during the research phase as well as on the final thesis. Supervisors will expect to see all raw data and statistical analyses. Students should consult the project supervisor if having difficulties. However, the supervisor is going to be more impressed if they show that they have thought over the problem in the first instance rather than immediately shouting help! Students are expected to analyse and interpret the data. Consultation with the supervisor is permitted, but the student should carry out the initial interpretation.

5.4.9	That guidance on plagiarism be written in such a way that students have no doubt about what constituted plagiarism, why it was wrong and how to avoid it. Consideration should be given to requiring students to indicate (by signature or electronically), when submitting work, that they were fully aware of the policies on plagiarism. [4.6.4]
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**Response**

The plagiarism detection software, *Turnitin*, has been purchased and policies developed for its use, including about whether to allow students to submit their work to *Turnitin*. SAC will produce revised guidance for students once these policies had been approved and these will be included in the student handbook. Students will be asked to indicate (by signature or electronically), when submitting work, that work is original and that they were fully aware of the policies on plagiarism.