

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 20 November 2009

Report from the Programme Approval Group: Faculty of Law,
Business & Social Sciences

Ms Helen Butcher, Clerk to the Committee

Present: Dr P Cotton (Convener); Dr Q Cutts; Professor C Steel**In attendance:**

Ms Helen Butcher, Senate Office

General Comment

The Group noted that the proposals relating to the MSc and PgD in Public Policy and Management had been developed as a result of a successful bid for funding from an EU integration programme. This had resulted in particularly tight timescales as the bid had been accepted on 25 September 2009 with the first cohort of EU students planned to begin the programme in January 2010. Members were concerned that such short timescales placed considerable pressure on programme developers and also those involved in the various approval stages. Noting the current provision for fast-track approval which gave flexibility in allowing rapid development of new initiatives, particularly those responding to external market demands, the Group suggested that ASC should consider whether this required any amendment given the tension that could arise between the need to put new provision in place rapidly and the assurance of standards. For example, ASC was invited to consider whether requirements should be set to ensure that programme and course proposal documentation was developed at the same time as funding applications, rather than after funding bids were known to be successful.

Sampling of Faculty Documentation

As part of the implementation of the recent internal audit recommendation that spot-checks of samples of Faculty documentation should be undertaken by PAG clerks, the Senate Office requested and reviewed the full documentation considered by Faculty for the proposed Diploma in Legal Practice (see item 1.3 below). The review revealed that all necessary documentation had been submitted to the Faculty for scrutiny. One small point was noted and reported back to the Faculty, this was that the individual Proposal Support Documents for each of the new courses did not have section B completed which should have been done at the conclusion of the Faculty scrutiny. The Faculty was asked to ensure that this documentation was completed in future, although it was acknowledged that the relevant information from the Faculty in this case was contained in the Proposal Support Document for the programme as a whole.

1. POSTGRADUATE PROPOSALS – NEW PROGRAMMES**1.1 MSc in Public Policy & Management**

Rationale: It was noted that the programme had been developed from two well-established Masters programmes currently operating in the departments of Urban Studies and Management and was aimed at individuals who would go on to work in public sector roles which combined policy development and policy delivery. Due to a

successful bid to an EU integration programme, the department of Urban Studies planned to run the degree from January 2010 with a specific cohort of students employed by the Romanian Government. It was anticipated that 15 - 20 students, funded by the EU integration programme, would be recruited to undertake the MSc as the second year of the European Scholar Young Professionals programme. Thereafter, the MSc programme would be available for general recruitment from September 2010.

Regulations: The new programme would conform to the Generic Regulations for Taught Masters Degrees and therefore be added under the list of programmes for the Faculty of Law, Business & Social Sciences in Gr.18 of the University Calendar.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and requested that it be reviewed by the programme team and amended in light of the following points.

- Aims (section 9) - it was proposed that the first aim should be re-written to be expressed from the students' perspective. It was also noted that the aims for the MSc did not differ from those for the PgD programme, and it was therefore requested that further aims should be added for the MSc to capture the additional component of the dissertation.
- Intended Learning Outcomes (section 10) - the Group requested that these be revised so that the Knowledge and Understanding section included reference to specific bodies of knowledge which would be covered in the programme and that the references to skills used in applying this knowledge (e.g. 'analyse and compare', 'evaluate', 'provide a critical appraisal' be moved to the Skills sub-section. The Group also requested that the ILOs be reviewed to ensure that they were all assessable (e.g. 'make use of constructive feedback' was not considered to be assessable).
- Assessment Methods (section 11) - It was suggested that this section should show how each of the ILOs were to be assessed and should also clarify the difference between formative and summative assessment. The Group also sought more detail in terms of the forms of assessment listed e.g. numbers of essays and standard word limits to give students, and potential students, an indication of the volume of assessment in the various components of the programme.
- Learning and Teaching Methods (section 12) - The Group sought more detail and explanation on the different learning and teaching methods which were planned for the programme. It was felt that there should be information on the proportion each of the various methods would be contributing to the programme and further explanation of "conference-style" delivery.
- Programme Structure and Features (section 14) - It was noted from the Faculty minute that a 4 week internship was to be integrated within the programme. It was requested that detail of this should be added to section 14 as a particular feature of the programme. The Group also requested that this section be revised to provide a clear explanation of the format of the programme (both for the EU Semester 2 cohort, and standard Semester 1 intakes) showing the timeline of when courses were taken and how credit built up as students progressed through the programme. This information should also show the exit points available when sufficient credit had been achieved. The Group also sought clarity over the relation between the dissertation and the Research Methods 'taught module' as they were unclear as to whether any separate credit was awarded for Research Methods/dissertation proposal.

Consultations: The Group noted from the Faculty minute that “*due to the bespoke nature of the programme and the short period in which the bidding process had been completed, it had not been appropriate to conduct student consultations or liaise with an External Examiner*”. The Group was concerned however that time pressures and the unique nature of the development should not lead to a reduction in normal processes which were designed to assure standards. The Faculty was therefore urged to ensure that consultation with other Masters students within the department, and an External academic was undertaken as soon as possible.

Conclusion:

The Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC subject to the following actions being completed:

- 1. consultation with an external academic;**
- 2. consultation with students on other Masters degrees in the department;**
- 3. review and amendment of the programme specification in light of the above noted comments.**

Progress:

The actions detailed above were all completed to the satisfaction of the PAG Convener. The proposal was then approved out of committee by the Clerk of Senate and Convener of ASC.

1.2 PgD in Public Policy and Management

This proposal offered a specific PgD entry to the MSc in Public Policy and Management as detailed in 1.1 above, and was aimed at students who did not want to study for the full MSc. The taught element of the award was the same as that for the MSc but no dissertation was required. The rationale stated in 1.1 also applied to this programme.

Regulations: The new programme would conform to the Generic Regulations for Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates and therefore be added under the list of programmes for the Faculty of Law, Business & Social Sciences in Gr.6 of the University Calendar.

Programme Specification: The Group noted that the programme specification was almost identical to that for the MSc and agreed that each of the points highlighted for that proposal also applied, with the exception of any references to the dissertation and the requirement to introduce some aims specific to the Masters award.

Conclusion: The Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC subject to the following actions being completed:

- 1. consultation with an external academic;**
- 2. consultation with students on other Masters degrees in the department;**
- 3. review and amendment of the programme specification in light of the applicable comments in 1.1 above.**

Progress:

The actions detailed above were all completed to the satisfaction of the PAG Convener. The proposal was then approved out of committee by the Clerk of Senate and Convener of ASC.

1.3 Diploma in Legal Practice

Rationale: This new programme was being introduced to replace the previous version of the Diploma which had been taught for the last ten years at the University of Strathclyde under the auspices of the Glasgow Graduate School of Law. It would be reintroduced solely within the University of Glasgow's School of Law from 2010-11. The Diploma, which would be compliant with Law Society of Scotland requirements, would offer LLB graduates an introduction to the professional practice of legal subjects as preparation for entering the legal profession in Scotland.

Regulations: The new programme would require a non-standard entry under the regulations for Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas as there was no separate exit point below Diploma level. The Faculty had completed the New Regulations Data Input form which would enable the Senate Office to draft new regulations for the 2010-11 Calendar.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification and commended the Faculty for the quality of this document, in particular, the clear information in section 11 which related assessment methods to the programme ILOs. A number of small points were made as follows.

- Intended Learning Outcomes (Section 10) - it was suggested that K4 should be moved to the Skills sub-section and its wording should be amended as follows: "Demonstrate independent and critical thinking and the ability to articulate their skills, knowledge and understanding over a range of subjects.". For S4 and S5 it was suggested that 'Develop and' could be removed from the beginning of each.
- Assessment Methods (Section 11) - it was noted that there was no information on the formative assessment of group work which featured in ILOs T7 and T9. The Group suggested that this should be specified unless professional requirements did not permit group work to contribute to the final award.
- External Reference Points (Section 13) - it was suggested that the reference to 'PEAT 2' in the final paragraph should be checked as all other reference were to 'PEAT 1'.

Consultations: The Group was pleased to note that there had been extensive consultation with students and potential employers. It was also noted that an external academic had been approached but there was no confirmation that any input had been received back. The Group agreed that completion of the consultation with the external academic was required before the proposal could be fully approved.

Conclusion:

Subject to completion of the consultation process with the external academic and revision of the programme specification in light of the comments detailed above, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.

Progress:

The PAG's comments were fed back to the Faculty. The Faculty has confirmed that the programme specification has been revised and will be made available to the PAG Convener as soon as possible. The external consultation is still to be completed, but will be forwarded to the PAG as soon as this has been done. The Faculty have requested that following approval by the PAG, the proposal can be submitted to the Convener of ASC for consideration out of committee. The Law School is keen to launch the fully approved Diploma as early as possible.