

## University of Glasgow

## Academic Standards Committee – Friday 23 April 2010

Report from the Programme Approval Group for the Faculty of Law,  
Business and Social Sciences

Mrs R Cole, Senate Office

April 2010

**Present:**

Dr P Cotton (Convener), Dr Q Cutts, Professor C Steel.

**In attendance:**

Mrs R Cole

1. *POSTGRADUATE PROPOSALS*1.1 **LLM in Contemporary Law and Practice (New programme)**

**Rationale:** The Programme is designed to respond to a demand amongst those practising within law and related professional areas for a professionally orientated postgraduate modular qualification that provides analysis of contemporary legal developments within a flexible learning environment.

**Regulations:** The new programme would conform to the Generic Regulations for Taught Masters Degrees and would therefore be added under the list of programmes for the Faculty of Law, Business and Social Sciences on Gr.13 of the University Calendar.

**Programme Specification:** The Group considered the programme specification and raised the following issues with regard to the proposed new programme:

- *General comment:* The PAG was concerned that the programme specification failed to give a clear picture of the nature of the programme. It noted that some of its own concerns appeared to have been raised at the March meeting of HDC (e.g. inappropriate level of ILOs) but it was unclear how they had been addressed. The block delivery of teaching appeared to be welcomed by employers and potential students but the PAG had a number of concerns in relation to the operation of this structure.

*Specific comments:*

- s. 10 The PAG considered that the ILOs failed to reflect the programme aims, and in general did not reflect the level of outcomes expected at Masters level. (E.g. K1. and K2. would be expected to be achieved at Honours level; many of the other ILOs would be expected at a lower level e.g. I6. 'develop a structured argument'). The PAG requested that these be revised.
- s. 12 Line 1: '... active and varied approaches to learning'. The PAG requested more detail. (E.g. what size of groups are anticipated, how would the days typically be structured?) How would students be supported outwith the days of block teaching, when they may be absent from the University for an extended period of time (e.g. if students are taking the programme over the maximum period of 60 months)? (In s. 14 it was described as an intensive programme of supervised learning – but it appeared in fact to be intensive only for short and possibly isolated periods.) If teaching were to be delivered by practitioners, would students be able to contact them outwith teaching time? Would students be

expected to carry out preparation in advance of the teaching blocks? How would the dissertation be supported? Were any of the courses that were to be delivered in block teaching existing courses that would be adapted for this form of delivery? Were any problems anticipated with this?

- s. 14 The programme appeared to require no formal research training.
- The requirements for progress to the dissertation were stated as being Cs in the two core courses and C in 60 of the remaining 80 credits. This was more demanding than the progress requirements given in the generic regulations. Section 7.1 of the generic regulation permits the requirement for certain grades to progress but only in relation to specific courses – so to require C in relation to 60 out of 80 credits was not compliant. A rationale should be given for specific grades being required for certain courses.
- In relation to the postgraduate Diploma and postgraduate Certificate: the specification needed to make clear that attaining the credits did not guarantee the awards; students would have to satisfy the requirements of the generic regulation (better to say: 'is a possible exit point', or 'students will be considered for the award of').

**In view of the Group's concerns, it is currently unable to recommend to ASC approval of this proposed new programme. The proposal has been referred back to the Faculty for an amended proposal to be prepared and amended.**

## **1.2 MSc International Planning & Urban Policy (New programme)**

**Rationale:** The proposed programme is planned to be delivered in collaboration with Zayed University, UAE, adding to the Department of Urban Studies' portfolio of real estate, planning and urban policy programmes. The addition of this new programme will help the Faculty to internationalise its Masters provision by offering a less UK focused and more internationalised programme option to students studying in the UAE.

**Regulations:** It is proposed that the new programme would be added to the list of programmes substantially governed by the Generic Regulations for Taught Masters Degrees at Gr.20. However, in view of the PAG's query regarding the requirements currently given in s.15 of the programme specification, this is subject to confirmation.

**Programme Specification:** The Group considered the programme specification for this award. The Group raised the following issues with regard to the proposed new programme:

- s. 9 point 3. 'Develop the necessary skills and attitudes to work effectively within relevant professions, across spatial and professional boundaries and with non-professionals.' How would this be achieved? Was it envisaged that this should be done through teaching alone or through placements? It was not clear from the Programme Specification whether placements would be required/guaranteed to be available – though the HDC minute of 5 March indicated that placements were not envisaged at the moment.
- s. 10 Under transferable/key skills: the PAG was concerned that these were not Masters level outcomes. Also, final bullet, 'display the key attributes of a global citizen' was considered not to have a clear meaning.
- s.12 It was not clear how students would be supported once University of Glasgow staff had delivered the teaching block and returned to Glasgow? What support would be available locally? Would students have access to Zayed University facilities?
- s.14 para 1 line 3, insert reference to postgraduate Certificate.
- s.15 Section on University regulations should be moved to s.14. The requirement for Ds in all courses on similar programmes was mentioned. The PAG required

clarification of whether this was a reflection of validation requirements. (If not, this would not be compliant with the generic regulations.)

- s.15 University support services: Was the final paragraph appropriate given that the students would be based in UAE?

**Subject to clarifications and corrections to the programme specification requested, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.**

### **1.3 MSc Working with Communities (Social Sciences) (New programme)**

**Rationale:** The Scottish Government and the Standards Council for Community Learning and Development in Scotland has identified a need for further training and learning opportunities at SCQF levels 10 and 11, and the current level of provision is limited.

**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 and Social Sciences on Gr.13 of the University Calendar.

**Programme Specification:** The Group considered the programme specification for this award. The Group raised the following issue with regard to the proposed new programme:

- s.12 The PAG requested that the dissertation be mentioned in this section with an indication of how students would be supervised and supported and what areas might be covered.

**Subject to the requested amendment to the programme specification, the Group recommends the proposed new programme to ASC.**

## **2. UNDERGRADUATE PROPOSALS**

### **2.1 BSc (Hons) Environmental Stewardship (Dumfries campus) (New programme)**

**Rationale:** Growing environmental awareness is anticipated to lead to a greater demand for courses such as Environmental Stewardship. Emphasis on “Energy Sources and Sustainability” and “Biodiversity and Interdependence” in the new Curriculum for Excellence in schools is expected to lead to a greater interest in environmental related degrees.

**Regulations:** New regulations were required. The New Regulations Data Input Form had been completed.

**Programme Specification:** The PAG commended the excellent programme specification which gave a very clear picture of the programme. The Group raised the following issue with regard to the proposed new programme:

- s. 14 The PAG had concerns about students undertaking a 60 credit dissertation in year 3, as this was a very substantial piece of independent work to be completed at this stage in their studies. The PAG requested more information on this, in particular regarding the support that would be offered to these students and the anticipated length of the the dissertation.

**The Group recommends the proposal to ASC, subject to further clarification regarding the dissertation being provided.**

## **3. SPOT-CHECKING OF PROPOSALS**

Under the current process, Programme Approval Groups examine only the programme specification and support document for programme proposals. However, PAGs reserve

the right to ask for full documentation if desired. It was recommended in the recent Deloitte report that occasional 'spot checks' be undertaken on proposal documentation.

In line with this recommendation, the Clerk reported a sample of proposals had been selected for spot-checking, and that the full documentation for the proposal shown below had been examined:

- **MSc International Planning and Urban Policy**
- **BSc (Hons) Environmental Stewardship**