

SCOTTISH AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

Report of the Review of Programmes in the Agriculture Subject Group held at SAC Edinburgh on the 11th & 12th April 2012.

Incorporating re-validation of:

MSc/PGDip Applied Poultry Science
MSc/PGDip Organic Farming
BSc/BSc (Hons) Agriculture
BA/BA (Hons) Rural Business Management

Review Panel:

Prof. David McKenzie	Vice-Principal Learning, SAC Edinburgh [Convener]
Jane Mitchell	Senior Partner, Clydesdale Bank, Thainstone Financial Solutions Centre, Inverurie.
Dr Stephen Chadd	Dean of the School of Agriculture & Principal Lecturer in Animal Nutrition, Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester.
Prof. Neil Evans:	Professor of Integrative Physiology (Institute of Biodiversity Animal Health and Comparative Medicine) and Associate Academic (School of Veterinary Medicine), University of Glasgow.
Graham Marr	Student: Year 3 BSc Countryside Management, SAC Aberdeen
Dr Margaret Norton	Horticulture Programme Leader, SAC Edinburgh
Dr Chris Smith	Academic Development Group Manager, SAC [Reporter]

1. Introduction

1.1 The programmes under review were as follows:

MSc/PGDip Applied Poultry Science
MSc/PGDip Organic Farming
HNC/HND/BSc/BSc (Hons) Agriculture
HNC/HND/BA/BA (Hons) Rural Business Management
HNC Poultry Production

The degrees are validated by the University of Glasgow. The HNC/HND awards are validated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). The awards were last reviewed and re-validated as below:

MSc/PGDip Applied Poultry Science	2008-09
MSc/Pg Dip Organic Farming	2005-06
HN/BSc Agriculture	2006-07
HN/BA Rural Business Management	2007-08
HNC Poultry Production	2007-08

As previously agreed, in order to move the programmes onto a new six-year cycle of internal review and revalidation this has necessitated delaying the review of Organic Farming by one year, and bringing forward the review of Rural Business Management and Poultry Production by one year and of Applied Poultry Science by three years.

The SQA's current approach is to maintain the currency of awards through incremental change rather than major re-validation after a set number of years. The HN programmes per se are therefore outside the scope of this review in the sense that they are not being considered for re-validation. However, for Agriculture and Rural Business Management they are part of the review by virtue of their status as Years 1 and 2 of the associated degrees.

Both MSc/PGDip programmes are delivered part-time by distance learning. All programme years are offered for Agriculture at the Aberdeen, Ayr and Edinburgh campuses and for rural Business Management at the Aberdeen and Edinburgh campuses. Poultry Production is offered at the Ayr campus only.

- 1.2** The Self-Evaluation Document (SED) was written by the Co-ordinating Programme Leader for Agriculture, Chris Stockwell, with contributions from other programme leaders in the subject group and their core teams. Drafts had been distributed for comment and additional contributions were obtained from the rest of the teaching team. Students had not been directly involved in the production of the SED, but had been consulted through questionnaire evaluations and the SAC Student Association President was consulted on the draft. Documents referred to in the SED were provided electronically to the members of the panel.

Revalidation documents were written and presented for the following programmes by the relevant programme leader following consultation with their core teams and wider teaching teams:

Organic Farming: Dr Lou Ralph
Agriculture: Chris Stockwell
Rural Business Management: George Robertson.

No revalidation document was presented for Applied Poultry Science. The validation of the programme in its current part-time distance learning format took place in 2009 and delivery began in academic year 2010-11. Only two cohorts have to date been enrolled, and only the first year (i.e. half of the taught component of the award) has to date been delivered in its entirety. The view of the programme leader following evaluation of feedback from staff, students and the external examiner was that no changes to the programme were required and hence it was proposed to the panel that the programme be revalidated in its present format for a further six years.

- 1.3** The review and revalidation process extended over two days, essentially the first day to consider the review of the existing programmes and their delivery, and the second day to consider proposed changes for revalidation of the programmes noted above (1.2), although there was inevitably overlap between the discussions. During the course of the review the panel had seven meetings with staff representing the programmes and two meetings with students (details are provided as Appendix 1). Inevitably, many topics were discussed at more than one meeting: this report is therefore structured by topic rather than as an account of each meeting separately for the overall review and then by programme when considering specific changes proposed within the revalidation of programmes.

- 1.4 The numbers of students (headcount) enrolled on each programme for the academic year 2011-12 are shown below:

MSc/PGDip Applied Poultry Science	31
MSc/PGDip Organic Farming	25
HN/BSc Agriculture	196
Aberdeen	79
Ayr	33
Edinburgh	84
HN/BA Rural Business Management	83
Aberdeen	39
Edinburgh	37
HNC (Distance Learning)	7
HNC Poultry	9

2. Review of Provision

2.1 Overall Aims

The programmes appeared to meet industry demands in that graduates readily found appropriate employment. It is noted that the whole agriculture industry is counter-recessive at present and that the breadth of knowledge and skills provided by these programmes means that there is a high demand for their skills, and that their employability is currently very strong. The flexible entry and exit structure, with qualifications available at the end of each year, gave opportunities to students with a range of backgrounds and qualifications to study to a level and at a pace that suited them.

2.2 Student engagement

For undergraduate programmes it was noted that since the introduction a few years ago of on-line questionnaires for module and end of year feedback from students, and despite measures having been taken by all SAC programmes to encourage their completion, rates of completion have fallen to a point where for most programmes and modules, the feedback is insufficient to be meaningfully evaluated. Students acknowledged that they were aware of the need for their completion and that they received reminders by email. However, in general they did not attach a high priority to their completion in light of the fact that opportunities available for informal face to face feedback with staff, and formal feedback through Student Liaison Groups, was effective. The effectiveness of this form of feedback was also noted by staff. Completion rates of questionnaires for postgraduate programmes were satisfactory but these were more usually issued and collected in paper form during study weekends. Postgraduate students also supported the effectiveness of informal and formal verbal feedback with staff.

The panel commended the team both on the range of opportunities offered for students to give comment and feedback on their experience, and on reporting back effectively to students to close the feedback loop. It was also noted that SAC's Education Management Group had recently begun a review of the collection of student feedback, and this initiative was supported. However, because of its importance for quality assurance the panel **recommended**: that a mechanism should be sought by which increased levels of both anonymous and quantifiable feedback from students could be obtained (*all programmes*).

2.3 Assessment

Both staff and students noted the high load of assessments in year 1 and 2 of undergraduate programmes (following the format of SQA programme frameworks and modules). It was acknowledged that measures which had been taken to minimise such problems such as, scheduling and some combining of assessments into a single instrument were fairly effective.

The panel explored in particular with staff and students whether the use of competence-based assessment in years 1 & 2 supported an effective learning approach to enable students to progress satisfactorily to years 3 and 4 where all assessment was graded. Both staff and students acknowledged that there were challenges in moving between year 2 and 3 particularly in relation to the increased expectations of the quality and depth of critical thinking and analysis. It was noted that since the programmes were last revalidated the successful introduction of graded units (one in year 1 and two in year 2) had gone some way to addressing this issue. However, it was agreed that more could be done to promote the development of such attributes earlier in the programmes. The panel therefore **recommended** that consideration should be given to providing some form of grading of all assessments in years 1 and 2 to provide formative feedback on the quality of the student's work and progress with their learning. The panel further **recommended** that more tutorial support in preparation for semester 1 exams in year 3 should be provided for students (*undergraduate programmes*).

The SED outlined that a range of assessment methods were used. The team were questioned about the effectiveness of group work which is at least partly assessed by peer assessment. Both staff and students confirmed that the approach was well received but students reported that in their experience the proposed scheme for allocation of group and peer marks was not always consistent. The panel commended the continued use of assessed group work but **recommended** that the team should take measures to ensure that a greater consistency of approach be employed in the assessment of group work exercises and projects (*all programmes*).

2.4 Assessment feedback

Student feedback reported in the SED noted that improvements could be made on the quality and timing of feedback on assessment. No standard policy on format exists within SAC but there is clear guidance in the Education Manual on the period within which feedback should be provided. Students interviewed confirmed that these times were not always met and that there was considerable variation between staff in the way and thoroughness in which that feedback was delivered. Students were supportive of the use of timetabled face to face sessions to provide generic feedback to the group. It was noted that the Rural Business Management core team is currently piloting a new feedback strategy for their programme. The team were commended by the panel on this approach and encouraged that the outcomes of such a strategy be communicated to, and adopted by other programmes in the subject group and SAC. The panel **recommended** that the expectations and timelines for feedback to students on assessments (both exams and coursework) should be clarified to both staff and students (*all programmes*). In this regard consideration should be given to both the use of timetabled feedback sessions following assessment and greater standardisation in the written format in which feedback is given including the use of electronic feedback.

2.5 Staff CPD and industrial liaison

The SED detailed a range of mechanisms by which programme content is kept up to

date in relation to developing knowledge and skills within the industry/sector, including formal Industrial Liaison Groups, the involvement of colleagues from SAC's Research and Consulting Divisions in teaching and programme development, the interaction with industry during student visits and field trips, etc. The panel acknowledged the considerable value of such discourse in maintaining the vocational relevance of the programmes. The panel also commented favourably on the CPD opportunities afforded to staff across a range of topics covering management, pedagogic and subject specific issues and commended the team on the number of staff who had completed a PGCHE shortly after joining SAC, the number who were fellows of the Higher Education Academy, and the opportunities afforded to teaching staff to study part-time for higher degrees. However, it was noted that not all staff necessarily undertook sector specific CPD every year to keep their subject specialism current and relevant to the industry. The panel therefore **recommended** that all line managers should strongly encourage all teaching staff to participate in industry/sector specific CPD activities on an annual basis (***all programmes***).

2.6 Use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) 'Moodle'

The SED reported that all teaching staff use Moodle to provide handouts and any other supplementary learning material. SAC has a policy which provides guidance on the use of Moodle and the minimum level of information which must be presented for each module. The panel received good feedback from students and staff on the usefulness of Moodle and the information provided by teaching staff using the VLE. There was evidence of significant progress having been made since the last review though it was noted that there was variation in the level of information provided by staff. The panel commended the developing use of Moodle to support learning and teaching. In light of the move during 2011/12 to cease routinely providing students with handouts in class, it was felt by the panel that it was timely to review the guidance to staff to ensure greater consistency in approach. It was also noted that the proposed merger of SAC with Scotland's Land-based colleges offered future opportunities for greater sharing of learning materials, particularly through the medium of the VLE. The panel **recommended** that a plan for the future development and use of the VLE should be prepared taking note of the broader need of the new merged institution (***all programmes***).

2.7 Use of video conference for teaching

The SED reported adverse feedback from undergraduate students on their experience of the use of Video Conferencing (VC) for teaching. This has been used by SAC as a way of making use of specialists across campuses. Staff are aware of these concerns and have been working to improve how VC teaching is used. It was also accepted that technical reliability had impaired the effectiveness of VC and it was noted that action had been taken to improve this, although some support issues still remained to be solved. Students interviewed felt that the medium was often better suited to tutorials and discussions than 'lecturing', and commented that they felt that some staff needed further opportunities to develop their technical competence in the use of the technology. A short life working group is being convened to review experience to date, develop guidance on future use and identify staff development needs. This initiative was endorsed by the panel who acknowledged the potential benefits of the medium for multi-campus delivery. Following positive feedback from some staff on the use of the alternative web-based conferencing tool 'Go To Meeting' for smaller group teaching and tutorials, the panel **recommended** that the use of this facility should be further explored and developed and appropriate support and training be provided for staff (***undergraduate programmes***).

2.8 Referencing

Inconsistency in referencing sources by students is not uncommonly noted by external examiners and the SED reports that students also commonly identify referencing as a particular challenge in the later years of their studies. Whilst referencing is introduced in the early years of programmes, students felt that it was not uniformly formatively assessed. The panel **recommended** that the team should develop a strategy for the progressive development of referencing skills and the avoidance of plagiarism, through all four years of **undergraduate programmes**. This should then be implemented for each individual programme and could in part be facilitated by recognition given in formative feedback (see section 2.3 above).

3. Revalidation of Programmes

3.1 BSc Agriculture Programme

3.1.1 Structure of degree programme

The panel discussed with both staff and students the merits or otherwise of having a four year honours degree programme based on '2+2' structure where the first two years were structured according to SQA Higher National design rules and were assessed by competence based criteria. It was recognised that the structure of the first two years was not entirely suited to the development of learning and other skills which were important for the successful completion of an honours degree. However, there was acknowledgment of the benefits of having clear and nationally recognised exit qualifications after the first two years (HNC and HND). It was reported by staff that both the quantity and quality of applicants to the programme were increasing; as a consequence, the proportion of students degree-registered on entry was steadily increasing and that degree-only enrolment was likely to result within a year or two. The panel therefore **recommended** that the programme team should begin to consider the structure of a full four year degree framework. This would most likely be based on two semesters per year, eight modules per year structure following the University of Glasgow code of assessment.

The SED reported that significant numbers of students chose not to progress to honours, instead graduating after year 3 with a general degree. Common reasons given for this choice, confirmed by the students interviewed, were that an honours degree was not seen to be necessary for a return to the family farming business and that a year travelling, often used to gain agricultural experience, was sometimes preferred. The panel **recommended** that the programme team should consider the value of developing an integrated masters programme which might take 5 years to complete and give credit for a year taken to gain practical industry experience which could be taken overseas.

3.1.2 Employability and industrial liaison

The revalidation document detailed the survey of industry including potential and past employers of SAC graduates which had been used to inform the review and revalidation of the programme. It was noted (see also 3.1.1) that the number of students progressing beyond a general degree to honours remained low. The panel considered that this might in part be due to a lack of appreciation amongst students of the long-term value of an honours degree. The panel therefore **recommended** that a survey of industry should be undertaken to assess industry's perceived needs for staff qualified to higher educational standards in 5-10 years time. The information could be used both to shape the future curriculum and to market programmes to

students and potential students in future.

3.1.3 Proposed changes to programme framework

The panel discussed thoroughly with the team the changes that were being proposed to the programme framework as detailed in the Agriculture Revalidation Document (Section B4.2):

- The module *Land-based Environmental Issues* moves to Year 3 from Year 4;
- The module *Advanced Case Studies* moves from the core and becomes an elective module in Year 3;
- A new module *Advanced Livestock Management Issues* is added as an elective to Year 3;
- A new module *Carbon Management* is being introduced to the core in Year 4;
- A new module *Topical Issues* is being introduced to the core in Year 4;
- A new module *Informed Crop Management* is added as an elective to Year 4;
- A free choice elective will be allowed in Year 4 which allows students to select any Year 3 or 4 module from the SAC catalogue subject to availability, timetabling and suitability);
- Students will no longer have to select a minimum of two 'business'-related electives in Year 4;
- The *Honours Project and Dissertation* is increased from 30 to 45 SCQF credits.

The panel were persuaded that the changes were evidence-based, resulting from the review of the programme, and would lead to enhancement of the learning opportunities for students. Some of the changes were being introduced to attempt to make progression to honours more attractive to students; in this regard the panel **recommended** that consideration be given to an increase in the contribution made by Year 3 marks to the final honours grade (currently one ninth). It was felt that this might increase the confidence with which students embark on an honours year, particularly following the increase in the credit weighting of the Honours Project and Dissertation, and potentially help increase the number progressing.

The panel set only one **condition**; that module descriptors should be reviewed to ensure that all reading lists were up to date and that learning outcomes were appropriate to the SCQF level in all Year 3 and 4 module descriptors.

3.2 BA Rural Business Management Programme

3.2.1 Structure of programme

The revalidation document noted a steady increase in the number of students enrolled on the programme which since 2008-9 has been delivered at the Edinburgh campus in addition to Aberdeen. The enrolments in 2011-12 at 80 were constrained only by the SFC cap on numbers; applications had been strong. The panel noted that the proportion of degree, as opposed to HN-enrolled students has also increased to 66.4% and the programme team had set a target to increase this to 77% by 2014-15 in line with SAC's strategic aims. In common with the BSc Agriculture programme it was noted that progression to honours was low with 50% of third year students electing to graduate with a general degree. The panel explored with the team reasons for this low rate of progression and measures that might be taken to increase it. It was noted that for some students originally enrolled on HN awards, this was a significant additional achievement; others often opted not to progress because

they had found jobs within the sector – which in itself was a commendation of the students and the programme. The panel were comfortable that the changes to the programme framework proposed (see 3.2.2 below) could enhance the attractiveness of the honours year, and that progression was likely to increase as a result of the higher numbers of Year 1 degree enrolments as they progressed through the programme. Given the progress made to date and the continuing demand for places on the programme, the panel **recommended** that the team consider enrolling only degree applicants in future.

3.2.2 Proposed changes to programme framework

The panel discussed thoroughly with the team the changes that were being proposed to the programme framework as detailed in the Rural Business Management Revalidation Document (Section B4.2):

- Removal of named honours streams in Agriculture, Animal, Equine, and Food;
- Adopting for Years 3 and 4 a core of 90 SCQF credits, with a choice of two elective modules, each 15 credits, in both years;
- A free choice elective will be allowed in Year 4 which allows students to select any Year 3 or 4 module from the SAC catalogue subject to availability, timetabling and suitability);
- Four new elective modules will be introduced to allow potential future accreditation of the programme by RICS: *Rural Surveying and Land Use* and *Multi-purpose Woodland Management* in Year 3; *Rural Property Valuations* and *Rural Planning and Land Law* in Year 4;
- The removal of the module *Business Law and Taxation* with business law being covered in the revised module now titled *Professional Practice and Law* and taxation being covered in the revised and re-titled module *Advanced Financial Management and Taxation*;
- The *Honours Project and Dissertation* is increased from 30 to 45 SCQF credits.

Previously, the honours streams had recruited inconsistently and this had led to challenges in delivering teaching to small cohorts on some modules both in terms of maintaining the quality of the learning experience as well as financial viability. The panel supported the team's contention that a common core with a broad and less restrictive choice of electives would still provide scope for specialisation but by setting minimum viable numbers for electives would help maintain standards and viability. To ensure the range of elective choice available to students the panel **recommended** that the team consider the viability of offering some specialist electives, e.g. in equine or estate management subjects, only every other year.

The feedback from current students on the existing module *Professional Practice* was relatively low compared to other modules. Staff reported that this in part might relate both to the law component which students found challenging and to the use of video conferencing to deliver some of the teaching which had been problematic. The panel agreed with the team in relation to the benefits of the module, not least in its contribution to developing employability. However, the panel were not convinced that the team had fully explored the reasons behind the students' concerns and **recommended** that the team should explore further with past and current students the reasons why the module was not favoured and take appropriate measures thereafter to enhance the delivery.

The panel discussed with the programme team their proposals for working towards

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) accreditation of a new Estate Management pathway within the Rural Business Management framework. Discussions with RICS had identified additional areas of curriculum which would be required before accreditation could be sought and as a result it was proposed to add four new modules to the framework (detailed above). Existing students confirmed that such a pathway leading towards professional accreditation would have been attractive to them. No other Scottish HEI now delivers an accredited programme and discussions would be taking place with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) with a view to acquiring additional fundable places to support this potentially 'strategic' provision within Scotland. The panel were supportive of this proposed development and **recommended** that the team go ahead to seek RICS accreditation and seek additional fundable places from SFC.

Overall, the panel were content that the changes were evidence-based, resulting from the review of the programme, and would lead to enhancement of the learning opportunities for students. The panel set only one **condition**; that module descriptors should be reviewed to ensure that all reading lists were up to date and that learning outcomes were appropriate to the SCQF level in all Year 3 and 4 module descriptors.

3.2.3 Quality of the student's learning experience

The programme team reported on the ERASMUS exchanges which had taken place in recent years particularly with the Netherlands and France. It was noted that these were biased towards overseas students visiting SAC but that this provided UK students with valuable experiences and knowledge. Most of the visiting students had been following equine related programmes and due to the lack of recruitment to this stream in SAC this link was unlikely to continue in future. Given the increasingly international flavour of the subject, the panel **recommended** that the programme should actively seek further opportunities for overseas student exchanges in future.

3.3 MSc Organic Farming

3.3.1 Recruitment and Marketing

Whilst the number of enrolments on the programme still provided financial and educational viability, there had been a reduction of around 50% in both the number of applications and the number of enrolments since 2006/7. In part this can be explained by a reduction in external financial support available to some students. Students are predominantly mature students who are already working in the organic farming sector. The team felt that recently the sector had been financially less buoyant and this may have reduced the willingness of potential students' to commit to the cost of studying both in terms of fees, the cost of study weekends and time. The team had, however, begun to explore broadening the constituency within which the programme was being marketed and the panel fully supported this initiative. The panel **recommended** that the programme team extend their marketing towards potential students who are not yet working in the sector, and in particular towards more recent graduates of related subject areas. It was felt that the team could also further develop their marketing of the programme as a relevant postgraduate award for those seeking distance learning programmes in the general field of agriculture, which was also supported by the views of students and a recent graduate in discussion with members of the panel.

3.3.2 Study Weekends

Both students and staff extolled the benefits of the three residential study weekends held each academic year. Students strongly supported the weekends confirming that in their view they were essential for building staff-student relationships and

communication, networking, meeting industry experts but most importantly in helping maintain motivation and enthusiasm throughout the period of study. There was recognition, however, that the financial and time commitment required to attend the study weekends might be a deterrent to some potential applicants; existing and past students supported the view that attendance was demanding in this respect. The panel therefore **recommended** that the team solicit the views of enquirers and applicants who did not subsequently enrol to gather more information on their reasons, and to ascertain whether the commitment, cost and format of the study weekends might be a contributing factor.

3.3.3 Proposed changes to programme framework

In light of their review, the programme team did not propose any significant changes to the programme, despite recognising significant sector changes in recent years. The panel explored this proposal in some depth with the team and were satisfied with it. There was evidence that the team were being responsive to ongoing student and external examiner feedback, for example in addressing problems experienced by students with the module *Marketing and Business Management in the Organic Sector* and in providing guidance to students on ethics and experimental design for the *MSc Project and Dissertation*. Elsewhere the team reassured the panel that the programme was sufficiently flexible in its format and outcomes to maintain its currency over a period of years.

3.3.4 Teaching and learning methods

The students interviewed by panel members confirmed the staff view that this was a demanding yet high quality programme which because of its mode of delivery provided a unique provision within U.K. higher education. The quality and variety of learning materials and teaching approaches, the access to expertise both within and outwith SAC, the industry relevance supported by farm visits and invited speakers, along with the programme and teaching team's approachability and support were all key factors in its success. The use of the web-based conferencing tool 'Go To Meeting' along with discussion threads and forums on the VLE was praised by the panel. However, they **recommended** that the programme team should investigate means for facilitating informal student-student discussion and interaction.

3.3.5 The panel set only one **condition**; that module descriptors should be reviewed to ensure that all reading lists were up to date.

3.4 MSc Applied Poultry Science

The programme team proposed that no changes to the programme were required and hence that the programme be revalidated in its present format for a further six years (see section 1.2 above). Having considered the evidence of review provided in the SED, the panel was content to recommend revalidation with the one **condition** that the validation document be updated to reflect changes in SAC policy and modules reading lists.

4. Conclusions, conditions and recommendations

- 4.1 The panel agreed to recommend to the Learning Division Management Team of SAC and the Academic Standards Committee of the University of Glasgow that the following programmes should be re-validated as awards of the University of Glasgow for six years from session 2012/13.

MSc/PGDip Applied Poultry Science
MSc/PGDip Organic Farming
BSc/BSc(Hons) Agriculture
BA/BA(Hons) Rural Business Management

The panel made a number of conditions and recommendations, which are noted in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4.

- 4.2 The panel recognised that the programmes had significant strengths, in particular:
- the breadth of topics covered in the curricula;
 - the use of complementary expertise within SAC's Research and Consulting Divisions;
 - the supportive learning environment.
- 4.3 The panel had few concerns about the delivery of the programmes and the revalidation proposals. The following **conditions** for revalidation were set:
- a. that module descriptors should be reviewed to ensure that all reading lists were up to date and that learning outcomes were appropriate to the SCQF level in all Year 3 and 4 module descriptors (**BSc Agriculture & BA Rural Business Management**) [see 3.1.3];
 - b. that module descriptors should be reviewed to ensure that all reading lists were up to date (**MSc Organic Farming**) [see 3.3.5];
 - c. that the validation document be updated to reflect changes in SAC policy and module reading lists (**MSc Applied Poultry Science**) [see 3.4];
- 4.4 In addition the panel made the following advisory **recommendations**:
- a. that a mechanism should be sought by which increased levels of both anonymous and quantifiable feedback from students could be obtained (**all programmes**) [see 2.2];
 - b. that consideration should be given to providing some form of grading of all assessments in years 1 and 2 to provide formative feedback on the quality of the student's work and progress with their learning (**undergraduate programmes**) [see 2.3];
 - c. that more tutorial support in preparation for semester 1 exams in year 3 should be provided for students (**undergraduate programmes**) [see 2.3];
 - d. that measures should be taken to ensure that a greater consistency of approach be employed in the assessment of group work exercises and projects (**all programmes**) [see 2.3];

- e. that the expectations and timelines for feedback to students on assessments (both exams and coursework) should be clarified to both staff and students (**all programmes**) [see 2.4];
- f. that all line managers should strongly encourage all teaching staff to participate in industry/sector specific CPD activities on an annual basis (**all programmes**) [see 2.5];
- g. that a plan for the future development and use of the VLE should be prepared taking note of the broader need of the new merged institution (**all programmes**) [see 2.6];
- h. that the use of the web-based conferencing tool 'Go To Meeting' for smaller group teaching and tutorials should be further explored and developed and appropriate support and training be provided for staff (**undergraduate programmes**) [see 2.7];
- i. that a strategy for the progressive development of referencing skills and the avoidance of plagiarism, through all four years of **undergraduate programmes** should be developed. This should then be implemented for each individual programme and could in part be facilitated by recognition given in formative feedback [see 2.8];
- j. that the programme team should begin to consider the structure of a full four year degree framework. This would most likely be based on a two semester per year, eight modules per year structure following the University of Glasgow code of assessment (**Agriculture programme**) [see 3.1.1];
- k. that the value of developing an integrated masters programme which might take 5 years to complete and give credit for a year taken to gain practical industry experience which could be taken overseas should be considered (**Agriculture programme**) [see 3.1.1];
- l. that a survey of industry should be undertaken to assess industry's needs for staff qualified to higher education standards in 5-10 years time (**Agriculture programme**) [see 3.1.2];
- m. that consideration be given to an increase in the contribution made by Year 3 marks to the final honours grade (**Agriculture programme**) [see 3.1.3];
- n. that the team should consider enrolling only degree applicants in future (**Rural Business Management programme**) [see 3.2.1];
- o. that the viability of offering some specialist electives, e.g. in equine or estate management subjects, only every other year should be investigated (**Rural Business Management programme**) [see 3.2.2];
- p. that the team should explore further with past and current students the reasons why the module was not favoured and take appropriate measures thereafter to enhance the delivery (**Rural Business Management programme**) [see 3.2.2];

- q. that the team go ahead to seek RICS accreditation and seek additional fundable places from SFC (***Rural Business Management programme***) [see 3.2.2];
- r. that the programme should actively seek further opportunities for overseas student exchanges in future (***Rural Business Management programme***) [see 3.2.3];
- s. that marketing should be extended towards potential students who are not yet working in the sector, and in particular towards more recent graduates of related subject areas (***Organic Farming programme***) [see 3.3.1];
- t. that the views of enquirers and applicants who did not subsequently enrol to gather more information on their reasons should be solicited to ascertain whether the commitment and cost of the study weekends might be a contributing factor (***Organic Farming programme***) [see 3.3.2];
- u. that the desirability and means for facilitating informal student-student discussion and interaction should be investigated. (***Organic Farming programme***) [see 3.3.4];

Appendix 1: Timetable of Meetings

Wed 11th April – Review

10.00-11.00	1 hr	Private meeting of review panel
11.00-12.15	1 hr 15mins	Group Managers, Programme Leaders and teams
12.15-12.35	20 mins	Private meeting of review panel
13.20 -14.35	1 hr 15 mins	Meetings with students, parallel sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undergraduates• Postgraduates (by telephone conference)
14.35 -15.05	30 mins	Private meeting of review panel
15.05–15.35	30 mins	Group Managers, Programme Leaders and teams
15.35-16.35	1 hr	Private meeting of review panel
16.35-17.05	30 mins	Feedback to Group Managers and Programme Leaders

Thu 12th April – Revalidation of Programmes

09.30-10.30	1 hr	Private meeting of review panel
10.30-11:15	45 mins	Meeting with programme team: Agriculture
11:15-11.45	30 mins	Private meeting of review panel
11:45-12:30	45 mins	Meeting with programme team: Rural Business Management
12:30-13:00	30 min	Private meeting of review panel
13.30 -14.15	45 mins	Meeting with programme team: Organic Farming
14.15-14.45	30 mins	Private meeting of review panel
14:45-15:00	15 mins	Meeting with Programme Leaders to report back on outcomes

All timings are approximate.