

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 23 May 2014

Scotland's Rural College: Request for Postponement of the Institution-led Subject Review for Environmental Sciences

Kenneth Hutton, Academic Collaborations Office, Clerk to the Liaison Committee

The schedule of SRUC Institution-led Subject Reviews (ISR) and Revalidations shared previously with the University placed the ISR for the Environment Subject Group in the 2013-14 academic year. The subject group also includes degrees validated by University of Edinburgh.

Glasgow:

BSc Countryside Management

Edinburgh:

BSc Environmental Protection

BSc Sustainable Environmental Protection

BSc Rural Resource Management

This has been a challenging year for scheduling reviews in SRUC since there has been ELIR in spring 2014 (visits in March and late April), Education Scotland review of FE in April, and already an ISR for Applied Science this year, in February. As a consequence the ISR for Environment had had to be scheduled for late May immediately after our semester 2 degree exams to ensure adequate availability of staff and students.

The last review and revalidation of these programmes was in 2007-8 academic year and the accreditation agreement states that *"Under Accreditation the obligations of SRUC include the organisation of validation panels for new programmes and the periodic revalidation (normally six-yearly) of all programmes delivered by SRUC and leading to awards of the University."* Hence normally, this review should take place in 2013-14 – six years on.

Unfortunately, it has not proved to be possible to prepare for and hold the review in May as scheduled and it has had to be cancelled for this academic year. There are a number of mitigating reasons for this including, the relatively recent formation of the new Environment and Countryside Department and the appointment of the Head of Department Niall Evans back in late summer 2013. The Head of Department and his programme leaders have a desire to use the review to consider a significant 'root and branch' revision of the suite of Degree and cognate HN programmes but have been unable to find sufficient time during the academic year with the dispersed team (based on five of our six campuses), to have adequate and meaningful discussion, and this has led to the inability to finalise decisions and the required paperwork. The situation has been discussed this SRUC Vice Principal Education, David McKenzie and Assistant Principal HE, Kyrsten Black and we are content that the Department's reasons are valid and importantly, that delaying the review and revalidation will greatly improve the quality of the end result and the future viability and sustainability of the programmes.

It is therefore proposed to postpone the review and revalidation until Autumn 2014 (most probably late October or early November once students have returned to college).

Dr Chris Smith

Academic Development Manager Higher Education, SRUC

5th May 2014