University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 17 April 2015

Report from the Programme Approval Group for the College of Social Sciences, held on 16 March 2015

Ms H Clegg, Senate Office

Present:

Professor C Edwards (Convener), Dr G Curry, Dr C Methuen, Ms K Powell

In attendance:

Ms H Clegg, Ms F Green, Professor R Paton

1. UNDERGRADUATE PROPOSALS

1.1 MA (Social Sciences) with Honours in Central & East European Studies with Quantitative Methods (New Programme)

MA (Social Sciences) with Honours in Economic & Social History with Quantitative Methods (New Programme)

MA (Social Sciences) with Honours in Politics with Quantitative Methods (New Programme)

MA (Social Sciences) with Honours in Social & Public Policy with Quantitative Methods (New Programme)

MA (Social Sciences) with Honours in Sociology with Quantitative Methods (New Programme)

Rationale: These programmes are being proposed in response to funding from Glasgow Q-Step for the purpose of improving quantitative skills among social scientists.

Regulations: The programmes will be governed by the supplementary regulations set out in the University Calendar at Soc Sci 13-16 (UG), which will require a small amendment.

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specifications for these degrees, and raised the following points requiring to be addressed. Unless otherwise stated, comments apply to all five programmes.

Points for discussion:

- In Section 12, information needs to be provided on any specific mathematics requirement;

- In Section 13, the information after the bulleted list does not constitute 'programme aims' and should be deleted. In the first paragraph, 'the aim of these with degrees are' should be changed to 'the aims of this degree are', as the aims should relate to the specific programme rather than the suite as a whole;

- In Section 14, two sets of ILOs were presented – one for the 'core' programme and another for the 'with quantitative methods' strand. The ILOs should be specific to the programme, and therefore must provide integrated ILOs for each of the 'with' degrees. The ILOs should be rewritten for each programme. Care should be taken to ensure the ILOs relate to the preamble 'will be able to', as many at present do not fit grammatically with the preamble;

- In Section 15, a list of assessment methods used throughout the entire degree should be presented, not only those relating to the quantitative methods courses;

- In Section 16, a list of learning and teaching methods used throughout the entire degree should be presented;

- In Section 17, only the link to the benchmark statement is required;

- In Section 18, the table needs to show the structure of the entire degree, not only the quantitative methods sections. The information from 'It is anticipated that students completing…' onwards should be deleted, as this relates to course information rather than programme. The default text relating to regulations at the end of this section should be reinstated;

- In Section 19, the final paragraph should be deleted.

It was noted from the Proposal Support Document that no RIO consultation had taken place because funding for the programmes was guaranteed. RIO confirm that this is not the case and that a market assessment should still be undertaken. The proposer is required to seek a market assessment which must be considered by College in the usual way.

Conclusion: The Group is unable to recommend approval of the programmes to ASC at this time. The proposals will be reconsidered after the changes have been made to the programme specifications and the market assessment has been completed and considered.

2. *POSTGRADUATE PROPOSALS*

2.1 MAcc Professional Pathway I (New Programme)

Rationale: The programme is being proposed as an alternative to the existing MAcc programme, for students who wish to develop academically as well as professionally.

Regulations: The programme will be governed by the generic regulations set out in the University Calendar at Soc Sci 46-48 (PG) and added to the list of programmes at Soc Sci 48 - 51 (PG).

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification for this degree, and raised the following points requiring to be addressed:

Points for discussion:

- In Section 1, the proposer is asked to confirm that this is the desired title for publication and appearance on the student transcript/parchment;

- In Section 12, the requirement for prior learning credits should be clarified;

- In Section 13, the text should be shortened and rewritten as programme aims, rather than Intended Learning Outcomes;

- In Section 14, the ILOs should be rewritten in recognition that they represent what the student will be able to do on graduation, rather than what the student will do throughout the degree;

- In Section 15, the first sentence of the final bullet point should be reworded to avoid repetition;

- In Section 16, the first sentence should read 'students passing the two…'. The fourth bullet point should refer to a 'virtual learning environment';

- In Section 18, the proposer is asked to confirm whether a Scottish equivalent to the ICAEW exists and whether the current requirement prevents Scottish students from taking this degree. It was unclear how progression to Masters and exit awards would be managed given that the Independent Work Portfolio

crossed both semesters and the proposer is asked to comment. Under 'regulations', section (d) should be deleted;

- In Section 19, the last paragraph has been duplicated and should be deleted

The Group had two main concerns about this proposal. The first related to the 60 credits of prior learning, which included ICAEW examinations. The Group was unclear whether these were Masters level. The proposer is asked to confirm this. The Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF) requires that 150 of the 180 credits must be at Masters level.

The second concern related to the Independent Work Portfolio course. The Group noted that there was 60 hours of class contact and that much of the content appeared to be staff, rather than student, directed. An examination was also included. The Group could not consider the portfolio to meet the University's definition of 'independent work'. Therefore, the proposer is required to reconsider the content of the course with a view to having it driven by students, meeting the current requirements for independent work, and to address the additional 60 course of class time.

Conclusion: The Group is unable to recommend approval of the programme to ASC at this time. The proposal will be reconsidered after the changes have been made to the programme specification, the queries have been answered satisfactorily, and the Independent Work Portfolio has been revised.

2.2 MSc Enhanced Practice in Education (New Programme)

Rationale: The programme is being proposed as a route to provide professional development for qualified teachers.

Regulations: The programme will be governed by the generic regulations set out in the University Calendar at Soc Sci 46-48 (PG) and added to the list of programmes at Soc Sci 48 - 51 (PG).

Programme Specification: The Group considered the Programme Specification for this degree, and raised the following points requiring to be addressed:

Points for discussion:

- In Section 12, it should be made clear that the programme is open only to qualified teachers;
- In Section 14, the ILOs should be rewritten in recognition that they represent what the student will be able to do on graduation, rather than what the student will do throughout the degree;
- In Section 17, it is not clear whether the benchmark statement is appropriate for Masters degrees. If not, it should be deleted and replaced with 'no relevant benchmark statement exists';
- In Section 18, under 'regulations', section (d) should be deleted.

Conclusion: The Group recommends the proposal to ASC, subject to the amendments identified above being made.

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 Deloitte Internal Audit 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 proposals shown below had been examined:

- **MA (SocSci) Honours Principal Degree "with Quantitative Methods" Programme Routes (Plans) for Central & East European Studies, Economic & Social History, Politics, Social & Public Policy and Sociology**

  As noted above, no market assessment was completed. The information on the new courses was in order.

- **MSc Enhanced Practice in Education**

  All documentation was found to be in order.