Teaching Committee

COORDINATING GROUP FOR SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMMES

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2007.

Present: Professor T Sheldon (Chair), Mrs L Booth (LLL), Dr T Boswood (CELT), Ms S Hogarth (YCAP), Dr M Ferguson (LFA), Ms S Hodges (ILIAD), Dr H Lawrence (GTU), Dr R Partridge (representing York Award for Heather Richardson), Ms K Radford (Library).

In attendance: Mrs S Clarke (Quality Support Officer, Secretary)

Apologies: Dr S Grace (YCAP), Ms H Richardson (York Award), Ms J Winter (GSA), Mr R Croker (SU).

06/37 Welcome

The Group welcomed Kirstyn Radford, representing the Library’s Information Skills Team, to her first meeting.

06/38 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Group approved the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2006 subject to the amendment of minute 06/34 to read "...a bid to FELT had been submitted to extract good practice from the YCAP portfolios."

06/39 Library Grant and Lifelong Learning

Further to M06/22, it was noted that the Centre for Lifelong Learning had received £500 from the Library's Special Purchases Fund for resources for the creative writing programme. The CLL was encouraged to apply to future rounds of the fund.

06/40 Hourly Paid Tutors
Further to M06/23, it was noted that:

- there had been in part a resolution of the issues in that within LFA, tutors were now on University fractional contracts although outside the HERA framework and, with effect from September 2007, tutors within Centre for English Language Teaching would be on similar contracts
- these new arrangements benefited staff. Some staff, however, had not wanted to formalise their employment arrangements and since left
- typically tutors were on 40% fte contracts. It was recognised that good employment practice meant that all teaching staff should be placed on standard University contracts (i.e., within the HERA framework), implementation of this arrangement did have additional costs for departments. The new arrangement provided a 3% rise in the basic pay with a 14% increase in costs to the department arising from contributions to pensions
- since staff had different responsibilities from lecturing staff, it had been agreed that the top two points on grade 5 were appropriate; analysis of current income against new arrangements supported the alignment on these points. The practice nationally was that Teaching Fellows were appointed to grade 6 on the HERA scale and tutors to grade 5
- the funding arrangements for LFA were such that all additional costs relating to the provision of their programmes had to be met from fee income. To implement a higher HERA grading would require an impossible 40% fee increase.

During discussion the meeting noted that similar considerations related to the tutors employed within the CLL, the Chair would be considering these with the Manager for the Centre.

The Chair reported that later that day he would be meeting with the Director of Human Resources for a briefing on the implementation of these arrangements, and it was helpful to know that, from the departments' perspective, a consensus on the way forward was developing.

06/41 Timetabling
Further to M06/24, it was noted that:

- a meeting had been held in December to resolve issues relating to the provision of appropriate teaching space. But CELT were continuing to experience difficulties with timetabling for short intensive programmes, particularly those provided in support of international links. Some options eg portacabins had been suggested but no firm proposals had materialised

- some rooms were inadequate for the purpose but could readily be improved by a coat of paint and new furniture.

The group was advised that any issues about the quality of the finish and furniture in any teaching room should be referred to Sue Johnston (Manager, Campus Services). Provision of £429k had been made in the Capital Programme for digital equipment to enable provision of the VLE to all teaching rooms. In addition there was the opportunity to apply to the Rapid Response Fund for additional equipment/resources.

The group noted that the Chair (tas5) should be copied into any correspondence concerning quality of rooms so that if necessary he could follow up any requests.

06/42 Language Support for teachers for whom English is a second language

Further to M06/27, the Group noted that CELT and GTU had met to discuss support for PGWT. It was further noted that consideration was still being given to the challenges of providing appropriate support to teachers for whom English was not their first language. The Rapid Response Fund was identified as a potential source of funding for any new training initiative.

06/43 Employability Skills

Further to M06/27, the Group noted that the Careers Service and CELT had held a joint pilot workshop in June to provide training on CV production and interview skills for overseas
students, attendance had primarily been from Chinese students. The workshop was to be repeated on two occasions next year. This had been the first occasion that Careers and CELT had worked together on such a programme and had been very successful.

The Director of the Careers Service reported on the impact of the change in regulations which allowed overseas students to work in the UK for a year after graduating. For those that wished to remain in the UK for this period, the Careers Service was, with graduate recruitment companies, exploring opportunities for appropriate one year placements. Many students, however, were seeking to return home immediately after graduation and the Careers Service was working with alumni in their home countries to facilitate opportunities. The Group applauded this provision of employment support for overseas students.

06/44 ILIAD/Information Literacy/PDP

The Group received a brief update (agendum 3) on consultations concerning overlap of interests between the three groups, and noted there was agreement that:

- although there was some overlap between the Iliad unit ‘Researching and Evaluating Information Sources’ and the information literacy training provided by the Library, this was perceived to be a good thing as it consolidated learning
- several questions about IT skills would be incorporated into the PDP template, links would be made from PDP pages to online software testing to test students’ IT skills, and links would be made from PDP pages to ILIAD materials online (since completed).

It was further noted that these and continuing developments along with the work on plagiarism would provide a suite of VLE tutorial support for new students. In addition to publicising this resource to students, staff needed to know of their existence and how these resources might be best exploited.
06/45 New Undergraduate Modular Scheme

The Group received a paper providing an update and setting out the proposals for the new undergraduate modular scheme (agendum 4).

Members noted that students would now be awarded credit (up to 20 credits) for successful completion of LFA modules within or outwith their programme, and the modules would be recorded on students' academic transcripts. This development provided a framework for other potential initiatives where credit might be awarded for extended development activities eg active participation in the University orchestra.

The Chair reported that the implementation of the new undergraduate modular scheme and consequent review of programmes by departments provided an opportunity for new initiatives and encouraged members to be proactive in exploring opportunities with departments.

The Group noted that the consultation document for the postgraduate modular review had recently been circulated.

06/46 QAA Audit

The Group noted that the QAA audit was taking place in the Autumn Term.

The Chair invited members to comment on the briefing document and it was agreed that members would be advised when the document, revised following Senate, was available.

06/47 Vat Exemption

The Chair reported that following a query concerning the eligibility of students on non-accredited courses for vat exemption on purchases of refreshments on campus, the advice was that the critical issue was that the students were in receipt of instruction which was a customs key criterion.
The Group welcomed the information and sought clarification on two matters: the situation with regard to members of staff who were in receipt of instruction and appropriate identification to be used for non accredited students.

06/48 Centre for English Language Teaching (CELT)

The Group received an oral report from the Director of the CELT.

It was noted that:

- in relation to the pre-sessional programmes, it was now possible for prospective students by completing the course work and passing the end of pre-sessional programme test to transfer from holding a conditional place to an unconditional place on a programme
- CELT were seeking to double numbers on pre-sessional programmes now they were competitive nationally but there were difficulties in recruiting staff to deliver the programmes (some universities English teaching departments offered free accommodation to their tutors)
- future plans included developing the provision for open learning for LFA and CELTS programmes, supporting flexible learning.

06/49 ILIAD

The Group received an oral report from the Manager of the ILIAD programmes.

It was noted that:

- the provision was changing a lot. Although experience was that students needed to improve their IT skills, supported from the feedback from the roll-out of the VLE, the perception was that this was a low priority for students. Although the courses were now free to all students, the courses were under subscribed
- consequently the Service was seeking to be less monolithic in its provision of programmes for students and work with other academic support providers, eg POD, GTU, to better match the provision to the students requirements.
06/50 Centre for Lifelong Learning (LLL)

The Group received an oral report from the Manager of the Centre for Lifelong Learning.

It was noted that the Centre had focussed its work on three community outreach projects, a partnership with the Family Learning Unit from the Council, at Tang Hall Primary School, West Field School, and Haxby Road Primary School. It was hoped that 5-8 students from these programmes would be joining the introductory year in Social Policy at York College in partnership with the University organised through York Higher this next session. The original programme had been so successful, it had received additional funding resulting in a further grant of £34k. This will make it possible in the Autumn Term to provide programmes in Music, Creative Writing, Family History and Citizenship at four sites including West Field School, Poppleton Road School, St Hilda's, and Burton Stone Lane Community Centre.

Further opportunities were being explored of cross border work with Hull University to build on the community outreach project at Eastfield due to commence in September..

06/51 Languages for All (LFA)

The Group received an oral report from the Director of LFA.

It was noted that:

- a significant development was the diversification in the range of courses, length and provision at a range of times including business language courses, German for medical students, programmes at lunch times (pre holiday sessions twice a week for 4 weeks) as well as evenings
- new undergraduate programmes had been approved including Spanish Language and Linguistics
- LFA would be supporting the HYMS new exchange with Denmark with language preparation
language programmes for gifted and talented were being developed with the Director of Admissions and Schools Liaison with a view to working with an identified group of schools.

The Group noted that the departmental review activity had been particularly challenging for LFA. Savings had had to be generated by increasing income from students requiring new activities to generate funds.

06/52 York Award

The Group received an oral report from the Director of the Career’s Service for the manager of the York Award.

It was noted that:

- 250 students were completing this year. Participation had increased with a total of 600 students being involved with the award
- a new option of 'Law of Ideas', was included in next year's programme assisted by alumni at Eversheds, which looked at Intellectual Property taking a legal and a scientific view
- the programme was providing peer support for new international students using group facilitation to build skills in cross cultural competencies
- in response to the Leitch Report, consideration was being given to a leadership option for students
- discussions were ongoing in how to coordinate CETLE, York Award and Careers developments which were all concerned with the employability agenda.

The Chair drew attention to the development of the University’s International Strategy and encouraged members to share ideas with the Director of the International Office.

06/53 Graduate Training Unit (GTU)

The Group received an oral report from the representative of the GTU.

It was noted that:
two new members of staff had been appointed on a job share to fill the current vacancy
as a consequence of being under-staffed; the team had reviewed its ways of working with consequent benefits, including more collaborative working, for example, with Careers, UCS, CELTS, and Counselling
it was planned to link members of staff within GTU with groups of departments with the objective of increasing the embedding of training skills in departments - linking with student representatives and with staff
in response to QAA's requirement to provide PDP for graduate students, a web-based package 'Skills Forge', developed in Electronics and linked to SITS, had been made available for all first years this current session
the GTU were seeking accreditation from the Higher Education Academy for the postgraduate certificate in Academic Practice, available for graduate students and already accredited by Teaching Committee. This would enable credits to be transferable.

The Chair reported that he had agreed with the Students Union that when the NSS data were available he and the Students Union representatives would work with Board of Studies representatives and students to facilitate the reflection and follow up to the survey.

06/54 Subject Services Section of the Library

The Group received an oral report from the Chair of the Library's Information Skills Group.

It was noted that the Library was reviewing its induction procedures for students, seeking to match provision to student requirements, and had consulted with other HEI libraries concerning options and preferences. The view was that despite the availability of i-pod and VLE tours, students preferred the personal library tour. Consequently the Library proposed to continue with the library tour for those who preferred the arrangement eg international students; and provide back up material (on the web) for those that did not attend. The Library
would also experiment with generic tours in week 3, which if successful could be repeated.

The Group had some discussion about the importance of students and academic staff being able to assess a student’s level of competency in using the library, and agreed that it would be helpful to have a simple checklist readily available, which could be used by students and staff to check students' skills and knowledge in accessing the library’s resources. This could perhaps be provided via York Extra or in the programme handbooks.

06/55 PGCAP (ex YCAP)

The Group received a report (tabled) from the representative of PGCAP.

It was noted that:

- the team had changed their name to Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice to come into line with other universities and make the qualification more readily transferable
- a grant of £25k had been received to develop VLE material for use with PGCAP in the first instance but possibly later for a wider market.

The Group noted that there were difficulties in working with the reduced administrative support reported at the last meeting, and this was not thought to be sustainable.

06/56 Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place in December 2007.

Secretary's note: arranged for Tuesday 11 December at 2pm.