

Periodic Review of the Department of Health Sciences, 14 June 2016

Executive Summary

Overview

The Department of Health Sciences provides a good-quality education for its students within a friendly and supportive atmosphere. The Department was last reviewed by University Teaching Committee in 2010. The Periodic Review came at a time when the Department was facing considerable uncertainty as a result of external developments. The Department's strong vision of itself and its future, alongside the leadership shown by its senior management team, leave it well-placed to navigate these challenges.

In advance of the Review the Department had independently developed and begun to implement its own action plan to enhance its provision, partly in response to NSS results and to the implementation of the York pedagogy. In this context, the Review provided an opportunity to reinforce the ongoing work of the Department whilst identifying further areas for improvement. The Department's strong focus on learning and teaching and on student support will help it implement these changes.

Departmental Strengths and Good Practice

The panel identified a number of strengths with respect to Health Sciences' provision, including:

- the strong leadership and strategic vision of the senior management team in response to the significant uncertainty and external challenges facing the Department (paras. 2.2-2.4);
- the friendly, approachable and supportive nature of the Department's academic staff, and their enthusiasm for teaching and learning (paras. 4.1, 5.1; 7.1);
- the process for managing the allocation of placements (para. 4.6);
- the diversity of placements available to the Department's students (para. 4.6);
- assessment of placements by electronic portfolio using Pebblepad (para. 4.9);
- the support provided by the Department's professional support staff, underpinned by their student-focused ethos (paras. 5.1; 7.1);
- electronic submission of assessment and electronic marking (para. 3.17);
- the focus on applied practical skills and the benefits this brings in relation to employability (para. 3.1);
- good relationships between the Department and the University's central support services (para. 5.11);
- the Department's good relationship with its student representatives (para. 6.1);
- the fact that desks are provided to all postgraduate research students (para. 7.7);
- the Department's positive approach towards, and engagement with, the Periodic Review process itself (para. 1.6).

Affirmation of actions in progress

The panel endorses the following actions or plans in the Department, which relate to ongoing issues:

- the existing plans to improve assessment and feedback (para. 3.3);
- the ongoing work to improve the consistency and quality of placement experiences (paras 4.4-4.8);
- the plans to review support for students with disabilities (paras. 4.12-4.13).

Main Recommendations to the Department

The panel identified a number of actions that the Department should take to enhance its provision. It is recommended that the Department:

- work with the Learning Enhancement Team to further embed development of skills in academic writing within its programmes (paras. 3.5-3.6);
- work, as a matter of urgency, with the University's Learning Enhancement Team to review and improve the clarity of its assessment tasks and guidelines, and embed good practice in this area into staff training and processes for approval of such guidelines (paras. 3.7-3.8);
- reconsider its existing approach to the provision of advice on assessment tasks in its undergraduate and Postgraduate Diploma programmes, or otherwise take robust steps to ensure that advice is clear to students and clearly related to marking criteria (paras. 3.9-3.10);
- work with the Learning Enhancement Team to revise its published marking criteria in order to provide greater clarity for students, whilst ensuring that the criteria are appropriately aligned with assessment guidelines and learning outcomes (paras. 3.11-3.13);
- take further steps to improve the consistency and quality of feedback on assessed work, ensuring that this is related to students' performance in respect of the marking criteria (paras. 3.14-3.15);
- introduce a more robust system for quality assurance of examination papers (3.19);
- consider whether to amend assessment within its Masters in Public Health and Masters in Applied Health Research programmes to allow students the opportunity to formatively practice the summative assessment formats (paras. 3.20-3.21);
- investigate and as necessary address reported examples of repeat teaching in its Masters programmes (paras. 3.22-3.23);
- establish a means to ensure that students on Masters programmes are aware of synergies between modules when making module choices (paras. 3.22-3.24);
- establish a means to ensure continuity of pastoral support on Masters programmes (paras. 4.2-4.3);

- review and improve guidance for the Pebblepad system, particularly for placement mentors (paras. 4.9-4.10);
- endeavour to establish a means to ensure students can consistently access necessary I.T. systems whilst on placement (paras. 4.9-4.11);
- work towards developing a workload model for its staff (para. 5.6);
- work with ASO to check that all core aspects of the remit of Boards of Study are captured within the terms of reference for its committees, and in particular that mechanisms are in place for senior staff involvement in review of NSS results and APR and that programme-level changes are reported to senior committees (paras. 5.7-5.8);
- work with the Faculty Operations Manager to highlight specific problems with student record systems and refer these to University I.T. Services as appropriate (paras. 5.12-5.13);
- investigate the possibility of space in Alcuin College (such as access to the JCR) being made available as study space for its students (paras. 6.3-6.4);
- work with the Head of Colleges to investigate how its pre-registration students could be better integrated into college communities (para. 6.5-6.6)
- ensure it has procedures in place to appropriately induct postgraduate research students who do not commence their studies at the start of the academic year (paras. 7.3-7.4);
- clarify to supervisors and postgraduate research students the arrangements for the use of taught modules as training requirements (paras. 7.6-7.7);
- establish means to build a more integrated postgraduate research community across sites (paras. 7.8-7.9);
- publicise the details of student representation for postgraduate research students (para. 7.11-12);
- clarify the restrictions placed by the NMC on staff holding teaching responsibilities, with a view to expanding teaching opportunities for PhD students (para. 7.13-14).

Further details are contained within the main body of the report.

Recommendations to the University/Support Offices

The panel identified the following recommendations for the University and/or Support Offices:

- That UTC / ASO consider establishing a means to facilitate programme approval and approval of major modifications during the summer vacation (paras. 2.5-2.6);
- That the Faculty Operations Manager work with the Department, Timetabling and other central services as appropriate to understand and meet the needs of the Department over the summer vacation in relation to timetabling (paras. 5.10-5.11);
- That the Faculty Operations Manager and Department work with University Accommodation Services to ensure the accommodation needs of the Department's students are appropriately met (paras. 6.7-6.8);

- That York Graduate Research School consider the Department's concerns regarding the impact on its postgraduate research community of being hosted across multiple sites, as part of its broader review of space for postgraduate research students (paras. 7.8-7.10).

Conclusions on quality and standards

The Department's provision is subject to the University's standard quality assurance procedures, including annual programme review and periodic review.

On the basis of the documentary and other evidence, the panel was able to confirm that:

- institutional and national expectations for standards are being achieved. These findings are supported by the views of the external assessors on the panel and by the Department's external examiners;
- institutional and national expectations for the quality assurance and enhancement of programmes and the student experience are being achieved with actions being taken to address matters that arise. One example of this is the Department's plans to revise its assessment practices.
- the programmes remain current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline, practice in its application and developments in teaching and learning. The programmes offer students appropriate curricula, and provide a suitable preparation for further study or employment.

Actions taken in response to the review

The implementation of the Department's action plan (when approved by University Teaching Committee) will be monitored through the Annual Programme Review (APR) process. An updated action plan will be submitted with the Department's APR report until all actions have been completed. UTC may also request a follow-up meeting(s) to discuss progress with the action plan.

Acknowledgement

The panel thanks members of the Department, in particular the Deputy Head of Department (Postgraduate), the Director of Practice Education, the QA and Project Manager and the administrative team for their preparation for and engagement with the Periodic Review.

Main Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Health Sciences is a well-established, research-active department with a diverse portfolio of programmes. In the University census figures of December 2015 it was recorded as having 1,077 undergraduate and integrated masters' students (734 FTE), 147 taught postgraduate students (69.3 FTE) and 34 postgraduate research students (27.5 FTE). These figures do not include students undertaking stand-alone CPD: the Department reported that its total student numbers in 2015/16 were over 1,650. At the time of the review, the Department had 51 staff on teaching and scholarship contracts, 26 staff on teaching and research contracts and 74 on research-only contracts.
- 1.2 The following programmes were covered by the review:

Taught Programmes leading to Professional Registration:

BSc Nursing (*with specialist routes*)

MNursing (Integrated Masters) (*with specialist routes*)

Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing with Professional Registration in Nursing (Adult)

BA Midwifery Practice

The programmes above lead to professional registration as a nurse / midwife. They involve a mixture of theory and practice, with 50% of the programmes delivered with students in practice on placements.

Specialist Skills Post Registration Development (SSPRD) Programmes (Taught):

BA Health and Social Care (Applied Midwifery Practice)

BSc / Diploma Health and Social Care Practice (Child and Adolescent Mental Health)

BSc / Diploma Health and Social Care Practice (Psychosocial Interventions)

BSc / Diploma Health and Social Care Practice (Generic Pathway)

Diploma Health and Social Care Practice (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Applied to Physical and Mental Health Problems)

The programmes above, all part-time, are targeted at registered nurses / midwives already in the workplace who wish to develop their skills. The Department also offers a range of modules which contribute to these programmes as stand-alone CPD.

Visit Secretary's Note: following the Review, and in light of the cuts to SSPRD programmes (para. 2.2 below refers), a proposal to withdraw these programmes and associated stand-alone modules was approved by Planning Committee and UTC. Programmes will be taught-out for current students.

Support Worker Education: Taught Programmes:

Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care: Associate Practitioner (*run in partnership with York College*)

Certification of Higher Education in Health and Social Care (*run in partnership with York College*)

The programmes above are targeted at those working in health and social care settings who wish to develop their skills. They are focused around work-based learning.

Other Taught Postgraduate Programmes:

Postgraduate Certificate in Health Research and Statistics

Masters in Public Health

MSc / Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Health Research

The Department also offers a range of its Level 7 modules as stand-alone CPD.

Postgraduate Research Programmes:

PhD / MPhil in Health Sciences

- 1.3 In addition, the Department also contributes to programmes in the Hull York Medical School and to the Biomedical Sciences programmes in the Department of Biology: this provision was outside the scope of the review. At the time of the review, the Masters in International Humanitarian Affairs programme, formerly based in the Post-War Reconstruction and Development Unit, was in the process of transferring to Health Sciences: this programme also fell outside the scope of the review.
- 1.4 Many of the Department's programmes are accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and must adhere to NMC regulations and requirements. This leads to some aspects of these programmes being 'non-standard': for instance, compensation is not available. Students on programmes leading to professional registration must undertake a certain number of hours of both theory and practice across the course of their programme. This number exceeds the number of hours per credit typically expected for undergraduate programmes (i.e. a 20-credit module will involve more than 200 hours of student work). Aspects of the Department's provision are also accredited by the General Pharmaceutical Council and the Health and Care Professionals Council.
- 1.5 The Department operates on a 'non-standard' timetable, with teaching on many programmes occurring year-round and exams taking place outside the Common Assessment Period.
- 1.6 The panel was pleased to find that the Department had engaged very positively with the Periodic Review process. Internal preparation for Periodic Review was aligned to existing reviews of provision prompted by NSS results and engagement with the York pedagogy. Collectively, this led the Department to identify a series of planned

enhancements (detailed in Appendix F of the Self-Evaluation Document). The senior management team reported that this had been a stimulating process. In this context, the recommendations of the review panel should be set alongside the Department's existing plans for improvement: the latter are referred to below as appropriate.

2. Strategy and Vision

- 2.1 The Department's overarching aims are to use high-quality teaching and research to improve health and healthcare in society by shaping both policy and practice. This reflects the nature of Health Sciences as a practice-based, practice-oriented discipline.
- 2.2 The Department faces a number of challenges in the short to medium-term as a result of external developments, which collectively amounted to a scale of change unprecedented in the sector. From 2017/18, NHS bursaries will be withdrawn for new entrants to pre-registration programmes, who will have to take out student loans. The impact of this change remains uncertain, but it was anticipated that it would create some challenges, particularly with respect to widening participation. Moreover, the Department had recently experienced a very significant cut in external funding for its CPD / SSPRD programmes, requiring it to review this provision. In addition, the NMC intends to announce new requirements for nursing and midwifery in 2017 and 2019 respectively, to which the Department will need to respond at short notice.
- 2.3 Health Sciences further reported that there was an emerging (as yet unofficial) drive within the sector to re-focus professional health education towards delivering a more flexible workforce. This would possibly result in a reconfiguration of pre-registration programmes away from specialist routes. There was also likely to be a growing demand for nurses educated to the level of an associate practitioner or equivalent and a reduction in demand for education to registration level, prompting a growth in alternative providers. Moreover, there was a national policy shift towards moving nursing care more towards community and primary care (rather than hospital) settings, which could result in changes to the type of placements required.
- 2.4 The panel was pleased to find that, in the face of all this uncertainty, Health Sciences' senior management team had demonstrated strong leadership in developing a clear vision for the Department going forward. At undergraduate level, this focused on providing a bespoke, high-quality professional education tailored to the needs of stakeholders and students and developing the future leaders of the nursing and midwifery professions. The Department was already building new placement links in community and primary care settings, seeking to better exploit opportunities in the Yorkshire region. The Department also intended to expand and diversify its taught postgraduate programmes to better align these with its research strengths, taking advantage of its international reputation for high-quality research. Staff appeared not only to understand the challenges facing the Department and the vision to address them, but also to embrace these as an opportunity in a positive and committed spirit.

- 2.5 In order to respond effectively to the challenges it faces, the Department and University will need to be flexible and able to respond to external developments at relatively short-notice. The Department reported that one problem it had encountered was that the fact that there were no UTC meetings scheduled for programme approvals and major modifications in the summer vacation, a time when the Department might need to respond quickly to requests for new programmes from funders or other external developments. Whilst UTC had in the past held extraordinary meetings to accommodate such requests, such demands on the committee were not ideal and a formal solution was preferred by the Department.
- 2.6 **The panel recommends that UTC / ASO consider establishing a means to facilitate programme approval and approval of major modifications in the summer vacation.**
- 2.7 The Department had engaged at an early stage with the principles of the York pedagogy, being a 'pilot' department for its development. The implementation of the York pedagogy was still ongoing in the Department. The panel got the sense that the Department was, as intended by the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy, treating the York pedagogy as an opportunity to reflect on and improve its provision.
- 2.8 The Department's senior management team felt that the University Strategy could do more to recognise the demands and opportunities of practice-based education. There was a feeling that noted the expertise in this area in Health Sciences and other departments could be made more of a positive selling point of the University. With its students and staff involved in working with stakeholders on placements in Yorkshire, Health Sciences was a key public-facing element of the University, which presented opportunities which could be utilised by the University. The Department would appreciate it if the value of its teaching portfolio in health-related subjects was recognised and strategically valued, in a similar way to its research on health.

3. Teaching, Assessment and Feedback (Taught Programmes)

- 3.1 The taught students met by the panel universally stated that they would recommend their programme to others. One of a number of aspects lying behind this positive view of the Department was the students' sense that their programmes strongly supported their employability through development of applied and vocational skills (resulting in exceptionally high scores for employability on pre-registration programmes). Those students who were undertaking their studies alongside current employment reported that their programmes had helped develop them as professionals, providing skills and knowledge which they were already actively employing in the workplace.
- 3.2 The need to improve assessment and feedback was a key theme identified in the Department's Self-Evaluation Document. Health Sciences had already proactively taken steps to address this issue. As part of its early engagement with the York pedagogy, and in response to a disappointing set of NSS results in 2014, the BSc Nursing programme had been audited using the 'TESTA+' method in 2014/15. This had proved useful in highlighting areas for improvement. In response, the Department

had established an Assessment Working Group to take this issue forward across its provision. For instance, this had identified an imbalance in assessment on some of its undergraduate programmes and had taken action to address it. Further actions had already been planned in advance of the review (these are summarised in Appendix F of the Self-Evaluation Document and referred to below as appropriate).

- 3.3 The panel endorses the Department's existing plans to address student concerns in relation to assessment and feedback.**
- 3.4 Notwithstanding the existing planned actions referred to above, the panel identified a number of concerns in relation to assessment and feedback and developed a number of recommendations in this area. As a general point, the panel noted that the need to improve assessment and feedback had been a longstanding issue for the Department, forming a key theme in the 2010 Periodic Review report. It accordingly felt that this issue needed to be treated more robustly than it hitherto had been. The panel was accordingly pleased to get a strong sense that staff at all levels in the Department recognised that assessment and feedback presented a significant area for improvement and had proactively taken ownership of this issue. Indeed, it was clear that staff put a large amount of effort into assessment and feedback and were frustrated that this effort was not yielding commensurate rewards in student development. This suggested that the issue was structural, rather than a fault in staff commitment.
- 3.5 Students on undergraduate programmes and the Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing reported that they and their peers at times struggled with academic writing. This was felt to be particularly problematic during transition to University study, but the issue continued in later stages. The panel noted that around a quarter of students seen annually by the University's Writing Centre were from Health Sciences. Whilst this disproportionate demand was partly due to staff commendably signposting the Centre to students, the panel was concerned that it might also be a product of a more deep-rooted problem, in which students used the Centre as a remedy for issues and concerns that could be fixed in the Department. The panel felt there was a strong need to further embed the development of skills in academic writing within the Department's programmes, something suggested by several students at the review.
- 3.6 The panel recommends that the Department work with the University's Learning Enhancement Team (including Writing Centre staff) to further embed development of skills in academic writing within its programmes, and as part of its implementation of the York pedagogy.**
- 3.7 The Department publishes detailed assessment guidelines for all its taught modules, easily accessible on its student intranet. The Department had recently introduced a process to systematically review such guidelines. Students met by the panel reported that, whilst guidelines for some modules were helpful, for others there could be a lack of clarity as to what was expected. Confusion over assessment tasks was also an issue regularly presented by Health Sciences students at the Writing Centre. Students met by the panel reported a disjunction between assessment guidelines and feedback,

suggesting that at times feedback indicated they had lost marks for not putting into practice things which had not been highlighted in assessment guidelines.

- 3.8 **The panel recommends that, as a matter of urgency, the Department work with the University's Learning Enhancement Team to review and improve the clarity of its assessment tasks and guidelines, and act to embed good practice in this area into both its staff training and its quality assurance processes for approval of such guidelines.**
- 3.9 The Department provides additional support to students on assessment via direct guidance from staff. For the majority of taught postgraduate programmes, this advice comes directly from the module leader, with sessions in each module dedicated to assessment. For undergraduate programmes and for the PG Diploma in Nursing, students can receive advice on draft submissions, with module leaders commenting on content and students' academic supervisors commenting on structure and style. Supervisors thus had a responsibility to comment on assignments for modules on which they may not personally teach. Whilst appreciating the possibility of submitting drafts, students reported that this was not in practice always useful. There could be inconsistency in the advice students were given *vis-à-vis* marking criteria: the panel heard anecdotal reports of students feeling that feedback suggested that their draft was good, only to then fail the assignment. This undermined students' confidence in the Department's marking processes. The panel speculated that this issue might be due to a confusion as to the respective roles of module leaders and supervisors in providing advice, or due to a lack of clarity among staff as to requirements for each assignment. The Department had already recognised this system as a vulnerability and was piloting an alternative approach to the provision of advice on assessment.
- 3.10 **The panel recommends that the Department reconsider its existing approach to the provision of advice on assessment tasks in its undergraduate and Postgraduate Diploma programmes, or otherwise take robust steps as a matter of urgency to ensure that advice is both clear to students and clearly related to marking criteria.**
- 3.11 On some modules the Department uses a team of markers. In this system, module leaders are responsible for oversight of marking on their module, having meetings with markers both pre- and post-teaching and pre-marking. Not all markers for a given module teach on that module. Module leaders are responsible for moderation of marking and have the authority to request changes to marking if necessary. Marking is based on published criteria, with a given range of marks bracketed into 'good', 'very good', 'excellent' and so on. These criteria form a key aspect of the mark and feedback sheets given to students for each assessment. Staff were able to convincingly articulate how marking criteria were applied and how this related to learning outcomes.
- 3.12 However, students met by the panel reported being confused by the marking criteria, and were not clear how they were applied or what they meant. This led to the impression among students – which the panel realised may not be correct – that the mark awarded differed by marker, and particularly whether the marker had taught on

the module. The panel noted that, whilst staff appeared to understand the criteria, as written these were rather opaque and at times circular (e.g. the criteria stipulated that a mark in the ‘excellent’ bracket should be awarded for ‘excellence’ in a given aspect). The criteria could be improved by providing more detail, with a suggestion that the Department could profitably make greater use of wording used in the University / QAA level descriptors to distinguish its criteria at different levels.

- 3.13 **The panel recommends that the Department work with the Learning Enhancement Team to revise its published marking criteria in order to provide greater clarity for students, whilst ensuring that the criteria were appropriately aligned with assessment guidelines and learning outcomes.**
- 3.14 Health Sciences had previously identified the need to improve the quality and consistency of its feedback to students on assessed work, both in terms of volume and in terms of helpfulness to students. It had recently introduced measures to address this issue, such as changing its feedback sheets. Students met by the panel reported that greater consistency would be appreciated: whilst they found feedback from some markers / on some assignments helpful, they reported that it was not always clear from feedback what they needed to do to improve their work. Students also reported that feedback did not always match the mark they were given or the marking criteria. Staff reported that module leaders were responsible for oversight of feedback from markers, and could and did request changes as necessary.
- 3.15 **The panel recommends that the Department take further steps to improve the consistency and quality of feedback on assessed work, ensuring that this feedback was related to students’ performance on the marking criteria.**
- 3.16 The concerns expressed on the issues of assessment and feedback by students met by the panel were set in the context of their anxiety about progression (due to the fact that compensation is not available on the majority of Health Sciences’ programmes, students on such programmes need to pass all modules in a stage to be able to progress). Students anecdotally suggested that some failures to progress amongst their cohort might have been avoided with improved assessment and feedback practices.
- 3.17 Health Sciences had moved to e-submission of all assessed work, with feedback to students also supplied electronically. This development has been broadly welcomed by students and by academic and administrative staff, the latter noting the way it had brought about efficiencies in process.
- 3.18 The Department had identified an inconsistency in its approach to the quality assurance of examination papers. It planned to put a policy in place to rectify this issue by introducing a more robust process for peer-review and sign-off of such papers.
- 3.19 **The panel recommends that the Department establish a more robust system for quality assurance of examination papers.**

- 3.20 In relation to the Masters in Public Health and Masters in Applied Health Research, students reported that their assessment was predominately essay-based for Autumn Term modules, but exam-based thereafter. They felt that this acted to limit their ability to learn from feedback and from practising these assessment formats.
- 3.21 **The panel recommends that the Department consider whether to amend the schedule and format of assessment on its Masters in Public Health and Masters in Applied Health Research programmes in order to allow opportunities to formatively practice assessment types and to build on feedback.**
- 3.22 Students on the Masters in Public Health and Masters in Applied Health Research reported that there had been an example of a lecture in one module ('Public Health Foundations') being repeated in a later module ('Health and Social Behaviour'). They understood that this was because some students on the latter module had not taken the former module but needed the knowledge delivered by this lecture. Students also reported that, as the modules aimed to be at the forefront of current practice, the same topical example was often used independently in multiple modules, and more variety would be welcome. Students also reported a more general sense of teaching referring to content in other modules, when the students present would not necessarily have taken (or known to take) these modules in combination.
- 3.23 **The panel recommends that the Department investigate and as necessary address the reported examples of repeat teaching in its Masters programmes.**
- 3.24 **The panel recommends that the Department establish a means to ensure that Masters students are aware of synergies between modules when making module choices.**
- 3.25 At the time of the review, the Masters in Public Health and Masters in Applied Health Research did not include placements. The panel was told that this was because, historically, a majority of students on these programmes took them alongside work: however, this situation was likely to change with the cuts to SSPRD funding reported above. The Department was actively considering establishing placements in its taught postgraduate programmes, and reported that it hoped to take advantage of the move of the Masters in International Humanitarian Affairs to Health Sciences to generate potential placement opportunities and, more generally, links to employers.

4. Student Support

- 4.1 The students met by the panel reported that academic staff were supportive, approachable and responsive to requests for further information, whether by e-mail or in face-to-face meetings. Students reported that they had generally had good relationships with their academic supervisors, and were aware of where and how to obtain advice in the Department.

- 4.2 Postgraduate taught students on the Masters in Public Health and Masters in Applied Health Research are initially allocated a supervisor, and then their dissertation supervisor takes over the function of academic supervisor. The students met by the panel were concerned that this could result in a depletion of pastoral support and reported a wish to maintain relationships with their initially-allocated supervisor.
- 4.3 **The panel recommends that the Department establishes a means to ensure continuity of pastoral support for taught postgraduate students.**
- 4.4 As 50% of total student hours on the pre-registration programmes are spent in practice, placements are a core aspect of the student experience on these programmes. As placements are run by and fall under stakeholders (for instance in the NHS), Health Sciences has only limited direct control of students' experience on placement. The Department, working with its partners, has good processes in place for quality assurance of placements in advance of students undertaking a placement. This process is assisted by NHS-funded Practice Placement Facilitators. The Department noted that quality assurance of, and maintenance of ongoing relationships with, non-NHS placement providers (which did not have access to these facilitators) required more resource. Although keen to establish opportunities in non-NHS settings, the Department was thus limiting its involvement to providers who could host reasonable numbers of students.
- 4.5 Whilst on placement, students are allocated a qualified work-based mentor from within practice. A register of suitable mentors and their qualifications is maintained by Health Sciences. The Department had historically provided a range of training for mentors, including a Mentor Preparation Programme. Students on placement also had contact with their academic supervisors and with the 'link lecturer' for that placement provider. The Department has mechanisms in place for reporting back to providers any mentors who failed to meet expectations and excluding them from its register.
- 4.6 The Department's placement area – the North Yorkshire district – is both geographically large and diverse. Although posing challenges in relation to travel time for students, this gives a considerable range of opportunities and a diversity of placement types, something which adds considerable value to students' programmes. The Department had a good mechanism in place for allocating placements, which involves balancing a complicated set of factors including student need, availability of placements, qualifications of mentors and travel time. The external assessors noted that this was a challenging task which is managed very well by the Department.
- 4.7 Students met by the panel reported that their experience on placement had on the whole been positive. A small number of bad experiences among these students or their peers had been dealt with appropriately by the Department. Students did however note that the quality of their experiences had been variable, with reports that on some placements there was either too much or too little to do. This was connected to patient: student ratios and was felt by students to affect their ability to learn from placements.

- 4.8 **The panel endorses the Department's efforts to improve the consistency of placement experiences, noting the ongoing work to reduce poor experiences and the need to manage student expectations with regards to this issue.**
- 4.9 Health Sciences had recently made a move to assessment via e-portfolio for all placements on pre-registration programmes, using the Pebblepad system. It had dedicated staff support for the system within the Department. Students generally appreciated Pebblepad, noting that its electronic format would allow them to utilise their portfolios after graduation. It was, however, noted that both students and mentors in practice could initially struggle to use the system, and there was a feeling among some students that insufficient guidance was provided or that guidance was provided at the wrong time. This extended both to technical use of the system and the level of detail needed in the portfolios, which seemed to cause some anxiety. More generally, students met by the panel reported that access to important IT systems (such as the VLE and Pebblepad) could be patchy whilst on placement.
- 4.10 **The panel recommends that the Department review and improve its guidance for the Pebblepad system such that students and mentors are more confident in using it, both technically and in relation to understanding the required content.**
- 4.11 **The panel recommends that the Department endeavour to establish means to ensure students' access to necessary IT systems whilst on placement.**
- 4.12 The Department had recently established a new committee to oversee, examine and review support for students with disabilities, both with respect to teaching and experience on placement. This was in response to imminent cuts in Government funding for the Disabled Students' Allowance.
- 4.13 **The panel endorses the Department's plans to review its support for students with disabilities.**
- 4.14 The Department reported strong concerns about a proposal to move consideration of claims for mitigating circumstances to faculty level, noting the importance of staff overseeing such claims having knowledge of the Department's context.

[Visit Secretary's Note: the proposal to move mitigating circumstances panels to Faculty level was not taken forward by Standing Committee on Assessment]

5. Staffing, Governance and Resources

- 5.1 Students met by the panel reported that academic staff in the Department, in general, were friendly, approachable and enthusiastic about teaching and learning. This was also evident to the panel. Both students and academic staff alike also praised the contribution of the Department's support staff, who appeared both professional and focused on improving the student experience. Staff at all levels were aware of the

Department's strengths, whilst they also both understood and proactively took responsibility for their own role in addressing its opportunities and challenges.

- 5.2 The Department had reported via the Self-Evaluation Document that a minority of staff tended to prioritise research over teaching and were not fully engaged with the latter. On questioning, it appeared that the senior management team was appropriately dealing with this issue via performance management, whilst also making use of the University's Teaching Performance Expectations. There were suitable mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate teaching performance.
- 5.3 Members of the senior management team noted that they faced some difficulties as a result of the recent decision by the University to impose delays on staff recruitment by four months, something which they felt had adversely affected teaching and learning by leaving some posts vacant. Whilst understanding the financial imperatives behind this decision, the Department was also concerned that this left it more vulnerable to the short-term external challenges it faced. The panel noted that there was an established procedure for applying for exceptions to this recruitment freeze, and that this issue was outside its remit.
- 5.4 The Department's senior management team had taken steps to reinvigorate the use of Peer Support for Teaching by appointing a member of staff to lead on this area, recognising that the Department's engagement with it had been relatively low. This, it was hoped, would help share the good practice of individual members of staff or programme teams more widely across the Department. Academic staff met by the panel reported that they were generally well-supported in their professional development by both the Department and the University, noting the utility of the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice programme for new staff.
- 5.5 The Department does not have a workload model for its staff. The senior management team were disappointed that Health Sciences had not been chosen to pilot the proposed University workload model, and were awaiting the outcomes of that initiative before building on the resulting practice within the Department.
- 5.6 **The panel recommends that the Department work towards establishing a workload model for its staff. This might include the model being developed centrally.**
- 5.7 The Department has a relatively complicated governance model. It had recently reviewed its governance structure and produced revised terms of reference for its committees to ensure that lines of authority and responsibility were clear, in light of staff feedback that decisions were taking too long or that work had been duplicated. The majority of functions of Boards of Studies have been delegated to the Department's Undergraduate Programmes Board or Graduate Schools Board, which in turn have delegated some decisions down to the level of programme teams. Although complex to outsiders, staff within the Department appeared to understand the model and gave clear and consistent answers as to how changes would be taken through the governance structure. The panel felt that the Department should double check that

core aspects of Boards of Studies, such as review of NSS results and APR, were captured in its committee terms of reference.

- 5.8 **The panel recommends that the Department work with ASO to check that all core aspects of the remit of Boards of Study are captured within its committee terms of reference, and in particular that mechanisms are in place for senior staff involvement in review of NSS results and APR and that programme-level changes were still reported to senior committees.**
- 5.9 The Department maintains a relationship with York College, albeit much reduced since the 2010 Periodic Review. The Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care and Certificate of Higher Education in Health and Social Care programmes both involve students spending the first six months at York College, to develop skills and numeracy. Both York College and Health Sciences staff teach on the programmes during this period, and students have an academic supervisor from Health Sciences and use Health Sciences VLE sites. The programmes are led jointly by a member of York College and Health Sciences and report to the Foundation Degree programme committee within the Department's governance structure. When questioned by the panel, the management team and a student on the Foundation Degree did not report any concerns about organisation and oversight with respect to these programmes.
- 5.10 The Department had an Embedded Timetabling Administrator, and worked closely with Timetabling to accommodate its requirements. These were complex due to the non-standard schedule and need to take into account practice placements. The Department reported some disruption to the student experience over the summer vacations, when its usual teaching rooms were used for conferences.
- 5.11 **The panel recommends that the Faculty Operations Manager work with the Department, Timetabling and other central services as appropriate to understand and meet the needs of the Department over the summer vacation with respect to timetabling.**
- 5.12 The Department reported that it enjoyed good relations with University central services, noting the helpful support provided by Registry Services; Academic Support Office (including the e-Learning Development Team, who work very closely with the Department); the Library; Communications and Marketing and I.T. These good relationships had been developed as a result of an investment in time and effort on all sides, with the Department helping the centre understand its particular context. The Department's administrative staff did report some difficulties with electronic student record systems, specifically the need to enter the same data in multiple systems.
- 5.13 **The panel recommends that the Department work with the Faculty Operations Manager to highlight specific problems with student records systems and refer these to University I.T. Services as appropriate.**

6. Student Representation, Engagement and Community (Taught Programmes)

- 6.1 The Department had a number of mechanisms to gather views from students, including student representatives, Staff-Student fora, module and programme-level evaluations and institution-wide surveys such as the NSS. Students met by the panel (including representatives) felt that they had a good relationship with the Department and reported that their voice was listened to, and were able to give examples of where provision had changed in response to student views. Students also reported that, with a few exceptions, academic staff generally summarised student evaluations and informed them of how their feedback would be or had been acted upon.
- 6.2 The panel heard that, due to the Department's diversity, the demands of being on placement and the fact that the professional pre-registration programmes had large cohorts, the role of student representative could be a challenging one. The Department was actively exploring with YUSU the possibility of splitting the role of 'Department Representative'. On a related note, the Department had also identified the need to improve student representation with respect to its part-time CPD / SSPRD cohorts.
- 6.3 Students felt well-integrated into the departmental community. The Department had given support to 'NurSoc' and 'MidSoc', the YUSU academic societies related to its nursing and midwifery programmes. When questioned by the panel, undergraduate students and students on the Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing were generally aware of these societies; other taught postgraduate students (who were however not on nursing or midwifery programmes) less so. Students reported that they would appreciate space to study together being made available. As the Department faced space constraints, one possible solution to this might be to find space elsewhere (e.g. in nearby Alcuin College), but this would require further exploration.
- 6.4 **The panel recommends that the Department investigate the possibility of space in Alcuin College (such as access to the JCR) being made available to its students.**
- 6.5 The Department had raised in its SED that its students on pre-registration programmes faced challenges in integrating into the wider University community (for instance, colleges and sport), partly as a result of the significant amount of time they spent in practice, but also the Department's non-standard academic year. This did not seem to be a concern for the taught postgraduate students met by the panel.
- 6.6 **The panel recommends that the Department work with the Head of Colleges to investigate how its pre-registration students could be better integrated into college communities.**
- 6.7 A significant concern raised by the Department was that University accommodation contracts were not aligned to Health Sciences academic year, with the result that students had the disruption of moving house at a critical time for their studies.

- 6.8 **The panel recommends that the Faculty Operations Manager and Department work with University Accommodation Services to ensure the accommodation needs of the Department's students are appropriately met.**

7. Postgraduate Research Students

- 7.1 The Department's postgraduate research community was relatively small given its size. The Department's senior management team was actively considering ways to increase its PGR intake, including for instance having distinct named awards to better indicate subject-specialism and establishing a distance learning PhD route. The number of PhD supervisors was at present relatively small. The senior management team reported a sense of resistance amongst a minority of staff to take on PhD students due to a feeling amongst those staff that they needed to prioritise generation of research income. The Department was actively addressing this issue both by emphasising University expectations and by encouraging all staff on teaching and research contracts to build PhD applications aligned to their research interests. The panel also heard from that some suitably-qualified academic staff on teaching and scholarship contracts would be interested in acting as PhD supervisors: the Department's senior management team was aware of this enthusiasm, but had to balance this against other commitments.
- 7.2 The research students met by the panel were content with their programmes and broader experience, with all stating that they would recommend the Department to others. The students highlighted as good features of their experience their integration within the Department's research community, the research expertise of the Department's academic staff and the helpfulness of support staff.
- 7.3 The research students met by the panel who commenced their studies at the start of the academic year had all received the appropriate central and departmental induction. Students who had started their studies in January, however, did not report receiving an induction, as required by the Policy on Research Degrees.
- 7.4 **The panel recommends that the Department ensure that it has procedures in place to appropriately induct postgraduate research students who do not commence their studies at the start of the academic year.**
- 7.5 Research students within the Department have both a main supervisor and a co-supervisor, in addition to members of their Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP). Students receive supervision meetings on a monthly basis and also have regular informal interaction with their supervisors. All students met by the panel reported that supervision was good, that their supervisors were approachable and supportive of their development, and that received high-quality feedback on their work.
- 7.6 The Department's research student training is bespoke for each student, although there is a general recommendation that students take three specific modules, collectively worth 40 credits. When questioned by the panel, students did not seem to

appreciate that this specific 40-credit block of training was not a requirement, and thus were unclear as to why some students seemed to receive an apparent 'exemption' from it. This seemed to generate a slight sense of unfairness among some students.

- 7.7 **The panel recommends that the Department clarify to staff and students the arrangements for use of taught modules in PGR training requirements, including the possibility of exemption from assessment, ensuring a consistent approach.**
- 7.8 All research students in the Department have their own desk: the panel noted that this was good practice and that in this respect Health Sciences' students were fortunate relative to many other departments. Both staff and students reported some concerns about the fact that the Department's postgraduate research community is split across two buildings (the RCSS and ARC buildings) due to broader space constraints in the Department. This led to the community being fractured, with research students tending to interact only with those students in their host building or their own research group. The Department had made some attempts to address this, such as regular 'coffee and cake' sessions. The students felt, however, that more could be done, mentioning the possibility of, for example, an annual social event or conference, or departmentally-facilitated lunches after research seminars in the Department. The panel was aware that the York Graduate Research School was examining how to improve space for postgraduate research students as a broader, cross-University issue.
- 7.9 **The panel recommends that the Department establish means to build a more integrated community among postgraduate research students across its sites.**
- 7.10 **The panel recommends that the York Graduate Research School address the Department's concerns about the impact on its student community of having students housed across multiple sites in its broader review of PGR space.**
- 7.11 When questioned by the panel, many of the research students seemed unaware of their student representatives. The Department in fact has three such representatives.
- 7.12 **The panel recommends that the Department publicise (or re-publicise) details of student representation for postgraduate research students.**
- 7.13 There were limited opportunities for research students to act as teachers or demonstrators within the Department. Students would welcome more opportunities. The Department stated that these restrictions were due to NMC requirements that staff teaching on NMC-accredited programmes had to be NMC-registered. The external assessors on the panel noted that they understood the NMC requirements to be more flexible than presented by the Department, believing that these allowed some input from non-registrants with regards to content not specific to nursing (for example in areas such as research methods, statistics and study skills). It was subsequently reported that there are some opportunities advertised (for one undergraduate module and several taught postgraduate modules), but with a poor uptake.

7.14 The panel recommends that the Department clarify its understanding of NMC restrictions on teaching responsibilities, with a view to expanding teaching opportunities for PhD students if possible.

8. Conclusion

On the basis of the documentary and other evidence, the panel was able to confirm that:

- institutional and national expectations for standards are being achieved. These findings are supported by the views of the external assessors on the panel and by the Department's external examiners.
- institutional and national expectations for the quality assurance and enhancement of programmes and the student experience are being achieved with actions being taken to address matters that arise. This is supported, for example, by the Department's plans to revise its assessment practices.
- the programmes remain current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline, practice in its application and developments in teaching and learning. The programmes offer students appropriate curricula, and provide a suitable preparation for further study or employment.

9. Follow-up And Action Plan

The implementation of the Department's action plan (approved by University Teaching Committee) (Appendix III) will be monitored through the Annual Programme Review process. An updated action plan will be submitted with the Department's APR report until all actions have been completed. UTC may also request a follow-up meeting(s) to discuss progress with the action plan.

Appendices

Appendix I

Procedural details

1. *The University's scheme for periodic review*

The review is designed to provide an opportunity for reflection on a six-yearly cycle by both academic departments and the University, on the continuing relevance of academic programmes to both internal and external needs. It complements other University procedures in assuring standards and exploring opportunities to enhance the quality of learning and teaching. Full details of the periodic review scheme are available at:

<http://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/monitoring-and-review/periodic-review/>

2. *Date of the Review: 14 June 2016*

3. *Conduct of the review*

The review was conducted by a panel comprising two members of the University's academic staff, both members of University Teaching Committee, two external assessors (subject specialists), a student member and a member of the Academic Support Office (ASO) (see below). The external assessors contributed to the pre meeting, attended throughout the review visit, commented on this report and wrote their own reports. Details regarding their selection, role and responsibilities are available at:

<http://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/monitoring-and-review/periodic-review/external-assessors/>. Panel members considered documentation and formulated an agenda for the review at a preliminary meeting held on 10 June 2016.

4. *Review Panel*

The panel consisted of:

Dr Roddy Vann (Chair; member of University Teaching Committee)

Dr Michael Bate (Department of Mathematics)

Mr Thomas Ron (York University Students' Union)

Professor Janet Hargreaves (University of Huddersfield)

Dr Mark Limb (University of Sheffield)

Dr David Gent (Secretary; Academic Support Office)

5. *Evidence base*

Documentation provided prior to the review visit:

- Self Evaluation Document and appendices, including further information about the Department, reports from PSRBs, student handbooks, statistics and a set of actions planned by the Department in advance of the Periodic Review.
- Student Submission provided by YUSU
- Report of the previous Teaching Committee Periodic Review to the Department (2010) and updated action plan.
- Annual Programme Review Reports and External Examiners' Reports for the 2013/14 and 2014/15 academic years.
- Programme specifications.
- National Student Survey Results (2014 and 2015)
- Postgraduate Research Experience Survey Results (2015)
- Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey Results (2014)
- Comments from a range of professional support offices

The panel had access to the departmental intranet pages.

6. *Details of meeting participants:*

The panel met with:

- The Head of Department, Deputy Head of Department (Professional Education) and Deputy Head of Department (Postgraduate Programmes)
- The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board of Studies, Chair of Undergraduate Programmes Board, Director of Practice Education, Chair of the Board of Examiners (UG & PG), Chair of Mitigating Circumstances Committee, Chair of Graduate School Board, Deputy Chair of Graduate School Board
- A group of fourteen academic staff, including Programme Leaders for key undergraduate programmes and Chair's of key committees.
- A group of ten support staff, and the Department's Academic Liaison Librarian.
- A group of eight students drawn from the Department's undergraduate programmes and PG. Diploma in Adult Nursing.
- Four taught postgraduate students
- Five postgraduate research students.

Appendix II

Overview of Key Issues and SWOT analysis from the Department's Self-Evaluation Document

Key Issues Department raised to Discuss (section 1.6 of SED):

Stakeholders and External Environment:

- The impact of changes to the commissioning process alongside the reduction in CPD/SSPRD provision on teaching activities and the need to be able to respond flexibly and rapidly to the external environment with respect to the withdrawal and development of programmes.
- Change in provision of professional education and training.

Teaching and Learning:

- Ways of improving consistency and quality of feedback on student work; both formative and summative.
- Managing students' expectations in relation to feedback.
- How best to balance the module credits and assessment burden in PG programmes whilst ensuring the students have flexibility in module choices and meeting the learning outcomes of their programmes.
- Ways of improving NSS scores.
- Possibility of having PTES on an annual basis.
- Ways of effectively facilitating student access to exemplar scripts.
- How best to manage the transition between the old "bursary" funded degree and the new degree following the NMC standards review and introduction of student fees whilst maintaining a high quality student experience.
- Impact of the University's financial situation on teaching and learning in relation to staff and student recruitment and retention, and teaching quality.

Student and Staff Support:

- Ways of improving student experience and integrating students into the Department/University, given that those on nursing and midwifery programmes have practice commitments and PGR students are split over numerous sites.
- Commitment of T and R staff to postgraduate programmes.
- Improving student representation particularly within CPD/SSPRD programmes.
- Ways of making the governance structure more effective with respect to decision making.

Infrastructure and Resources:

- Ways of improving management information systems such as those related to student data and records in the absence of a central system that aligns with external need (PSRB/NHS) as well as that of the University.
- Space (PGR and staff office space).

- Communication between central services and Departments.

SWOT Analysis (Section 1.5 of SED)

Strengths:

Strong Links with Stakeholders:

- Partnerships with employers (local NHS trusts, clinical commissioning groups, private and voluntary sector, and Health Education England (across Yorkshire and Humber) for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching.
- Responsiveness to employers and external stakeholders, e.g.: programme/module development.
- Strongly embedded public and patient/service user involvement in programme development.
- Effective management of 700 practice placements by DoHS Allocations Team in accordance with NMC standards. This involves 300+ NHS and non-NHS placement providers and the co-ordination of 3,500 mentors to support the process.
- Good working relationships and collaborations with other University departments and services, e.g.: Biology, HYMS, Library, and e-Learning Team.

Teaching and Learning:

- Innovative pedagogical approaches to teaching, learning and assessment
- Introduction of e-portfolio for professional programmes.
- Diverse methods of assessment (OSCEs, portfolios, presentations).
- Provision of high quality documentation to students, for example, assessment guidelines and comprehensive programme specific assessment schedules.
- Effective and robust Departmental teaching governance structures which are closely aligned to educational activity and specific programme needs.
- Experienced teaching staff skilled in delivering high quality modules and programmes.
Note: the NMC requires nurse/midwifery lecturers to register a teaching qualification with them so most T&S staff either have, or are working toward fulfilling this criteria.
- Dedicated and enthusiastic administrative and support staff who are highly proficient in supporting a diverse student body.
- Excellent employment rates (approaching 100%) for pre-registration nursing/midwifery students.
- The Clinical Simulation Unit (CSU) facilities.

Student and Staff Support:

- Comprehensive support provided to staff and students by Student Information Services, Student Assessment Office, and the Marketing and Communications Team.

- Detailed programme handbooks which are updated throughout the course of the academic year.
- Close working relationship with the Academic Liaison Librarian to support a range of student activities including digital literacy and literature searching.
- Effective student engagement through staff-student forums and committee membership and an active “you said, we did” campaign.
- A number of students and staff have won awards both nationally and locally (see APR for details).

Infrastructure and Resources:

- Embedded Timetabling Administrator which has helped in more effective use of local teaching space.
- Development of ‘Preparing to Study’ sites for incoming students.
- Dedicated technical and administrative staff resource for VLE and e-portfolio (Pebblepad) with strong DMT support for the development of these learning tools.
- Dedicated IT team which provides innovative solutions, and daily operational support.

Weaknesses:

Teaching and Learning:

- The need to respond at speed to a rapidly changing NHS context in terms of programme content and delivery; the focus on satisfying commissioners of Health Education can mean that quality assurance and governance become secondary.
- Inconsistencies in approach to quality assurance of exam papers.
- Some lack of consistency in the quality of feedback provided on formative and summative assessments.
- Variation in the student evaluation process with respect to response rate and mode of data gathering. Pre-registration programmes have moved to an electronic system but CPD/SSPRD and PG programmes are reliant on paper evaluations. Similar problems are also evident with respect to clinical placement evaluations, however this is improving slowly (e.g.: Nursing = 56% / Midwifery = 100%).
- Lack of quality assurance of VLE sites.
- No process currently in place for bi-monthly review of practice evaluations by Practice Education Facilitators for the non-NHS sector (although non-NHS sector will be invited to Practice Education Support Partnership meetings from July 2015).

Student and Staff Support:

- Maintaining strong communications links with CPD/SSPRD students is difficult.
- Accurately capturing and sharing Peer Support for Teaching.
- Lack of robust infrastructure for dealing with student disability issues.

Infrastructure and Resources:

- The staff/student intranet is not always easy to navigate and information is not always up-to-date. Moreover, the process for updating content needs reviewing along with page ownership.

- Teaching on pre-registration nursing and midwifery programmes continues all year round and does not align with the standard common assessment period used by most other departments. As such, during this time, room availability is limited in Alcuin facilities and teaching can be scheduled all across campus.
- No one IT system meets the total information needs of the Department and duplicate systems which are not interfaced are required, including some manual record keeping. This necessitates duplicate reporting which is inefficient and error prone.
- Expediency of introducing new University-wide IT developments and training.
- Lack of opportunities for PGWT due to the requirements of the NMC in relation to staff qualifications.
- Some University processes and use of data to model change.

Opportunities:

Strong Links with Stakeholders:

- Build on existing links with departments with a view to developing joint Masters and PhD programmes.
- Build on existing relationships with external stakeholders/service providers to develop new modular and programme provision.

Teaching and Learning:

- Review of Departmental strategies to ensure they align with each other and are more visible to staff and students.
- The end of commissioning creates an opportunity to develop explicit strategy around Teaching and Learning and the future of nursing and midwifery at York.
- Develop an E-Learning Strategy aligned with the future direction of the Department's teaching and research activities.
- Review of the Department's governance framework, e.g.: structure, committee terms of reference, accountability/reporting lines, policy approval processes, in order to strengthen decision-making.
- Review programme learning outcomes and methods of assessment and feedback in accordance with the York Pedagogy, and with a view to improving the student experience.
- Develop new named awards for PGR programmes to meet needs of target audiences.
- Improve overseas recruitment to PGT and PGR programmes.
- Develop student evaluation systems aligned with the student demography rather than 'one size fits all', e.g.: Qualtrics.

Student and Staff Support:

- Establish Departmental Student Disability Committee to strengthen and promote best practice in relation to disability issues. Committee will include practice partners, students and Departmental staff and will be formalised within the Departmental Governance Structure.
- Introduce a new role of Academic Lead for Peer Support for Teaching to champion PST activity, support staff in their development, and lead the development of systems and processes to share PST activity. The role to be formalised within the Departmental Governance Structure.
- Formalise the Handbook Working Group within the Departmental Governance Structure to ensure robust, consistent and timely approach to the development/modification of

handbooks.

- Review the option for having separate UG and PG Departmental representatives due to the differing challenges faced by students.
- Review of staff and student communications on a programme level basis.

Infrastructure and Resources:

- Re-launch the Information Strategy Group to lead the strategic development of information management and systems within the Department.
- Utilise the results of the Data and Information Management scoping exercise to prioritise IT developments.
- To make greater use of the functionality available within the VLE whilst managing student expectations.
- To review staff induction processes to ensure new staff are integrated effectively into the Department.

Threats:

External Environment and Financial Position:

- Significant changes to the external NHS commissioning environment including:
- Loss of £500K income per annum with effect from 1 April 2016 due to 51% reduction in CPD/SSPRD contract. This also has implications for PGT programmes.
- Reconfiguration of service providers.
- Challenges to the placement circuit for professional programmes.
- Many of our existing stakeholders are likely to become education providers in their own right in the near future – taking advantage of the apprenticeship levy to educated nurses and midwives in settings alternative to universities.
- The emergence of multiple alternative nurse providers in addition to the introduction of the associate nurse may mean that numbers of registered nurses required in the workforce declines in the mid-term.
- Uncertainty of University's financial position impacts on the Department's future strategy.
- Impact on recruitment to pre-registration programmes from the academic year 2017/18 post the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2015 for pre-registration students (Nursing, Midwifery, and Allied Health Professionals) to transfer from the NHS bursary funded system to the student loan system.
- Withdrawal of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) – see point below under Student and Staff Support.

Teaching and Learning:

- Decision-making within committees is not always effective (issue first raised in Staff Survey 2014).
- Lack of consistency with assessment and feedback leads to poor NSS scores.
- Assessment burden is too high for both staff and students.
- Recruitment and retention of staff at senior levels.

Student and Staff Support:

- Withdrawal of the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) in the near future will result in some students not being able to procure the specialist equipment they need to study and, consequently, this could have a detrimental effect on the students' learning as well as a financial impact on the Department.
- Some inconsistencies in knowledge amongst staff related to handbook content/policies resulting in incorrect information being passed to students.

Infrastructure and Resources:

- Office space within the Department now at peak capacity due to significant growth across all staff groups and staff from other departments embedded within DoHS.
- PGR students are split across ReCCS and DoHS, this means it is challenging to fully integrate PGR students into the Department.
- Pressure on availability of teaching space due to the specific requirements of the Health Sciences timetable, e.g.: four-term timetable, 50% split between academic learning and practice placement, large and small teaching rooms required for lectures and co-operative learning groups.
- Complexity of data and management information produced by the Department to meet PSRB and NHS requirements is difficult/time-consuming due to functionality and lack of integration of University IT systems. For example, need to have attendance monitoring.
- Inadequate use of student record systems e.g.: Alfresco, leaves DoHS unable to access full records of students in the absence of supervisors leading to potentially ineffective student support.
- Reduced support for VLE from University e-Learning Team on-line modular development.
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Appendix III: Action plan arising from Periodic Review of the Department of Health Sciences, 2016

Report reference	Problem and action required, including any necessary background information (e.g. how identified)	Agreed action in response	By whom (lead)	By when	Updates
Recommendations:					
3.6	Work with the University's Learning Enhancement Team (LET) to further embed development of skills in academic writing within its programmes, and as part of its implementation of the York pedagogy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact LET to arrange a series of meetings with programme leaders/committee chairs to work on embedding academic skills within programmes, in particular in relation to the implementation of the pedagogy. 2. Discuss with LET the current skills that are available (see updates but need to ensure that all programmes are covered in this discussion), review if these are sufficient to meet the needs of the student groups and to identify any gaps. 3. Discuss with students via staff-student forums the skills (writing and numeracy) that are provided and invite their views on how these currently provide support. 4. Identify the best way to embed these skills within the programme structure and refine documentation accordingly (For example, for professional programmes making optional sessions mandatory whilst linking with the overall programme design, using formative assessments to develop these skills). NB For 	Chair Bos	1-3: by end of autumn term 2016 4: end of spring term 2017 5 & 6: end of summer term 2017 7: start 2017/18 academic year	<p>Work has already begun on this as part of the Academic Support and Feedback Project led by Dep Head of Professional programmes. It has been identified that for the Nursing Programme, a comprehensive range of academic skills/writing events is offered during each stage of the programme, alongside calculation sessions, with the library also contributing a series of sessions. How these are further embedded in the programme will form part of the action plan.</p>

	<p>UG this may happen after the initial implementation of the pedagogy and involve additional changes, but aligns with the timeline for PGT.</p> <p>5. Liaise with LET and ASO and consult with students over proposed changes. This action may link with 3.8.</p> <p>6. Ensure all programme information is updated (e.g. handbooks, student intranet).</p> <p>7. Incorporate sessions on how academic skills are embedded within the programme structure at the start of 2017/8 for each student cohort.</p> <p><i>[Visit Secretary's Note: the above action was formulated prior to consultation with the Learning Enhancement Team. The Head of Learning Enhancement has indicated that the action should be revised following consultation between the team and the Department and that there would be value in connecting this work with the other actions concerning Learning Enhancement below, such that these should be seen as part of one broader action on assessment and feedback. These actions (3.6, 3.8, 3.13 and 3.15) will thus be revised and resubmitted for approval]</i></p>		
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	<p>UTC M16-17/36: Dr Vann highlighted some of the key recommendations contained within the report which included improving the clarity of assessment tasks, improving the consistency of feedback, and clarifying the Department's governance arrangements. It was reported that the issues relating to assessment and feedback were also evident in the National Student Survey results 2016 and the Head of Learning Enhancement had indicated that the proposed actions connected with assessment and feedback (3.6, 3.8, 3.13 and, by extension, 3.15) did not specifically address the recommendations in the report. These actions would be revised following consultation between the Learning Enhancement Team and the Department, and treated as part of a broader, connected discussion on assessment rather than individual pieces of work.</p> <p>UTC Secretary's post-meeting note: a meeting had been scheduled between the Department, members of the Academic Support Office (Academic Quality, Learning Enhancement, the Department's ProPEL contact) and the Chair of UTC to consider how best to coordinate all curriculum-related work arising from a range of action plans and projects. The Department's periodic review action plan would be revised</p>		
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		<i>accordingly and resubmitted to UTC in the Spring Term.</i>			
3.8	As a matter of urgency, work with the University's Learning Enhancement Team (LET) to review and improve the clarity of its assessment guidelines, and act to embed good practice in this area into both its staff training and its quality assurance processes for approval of such guidelines.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact LET and arrange a series of meetings with programme leaders/committee chairs over the course of the 2016/17 academic year. 2. To work with LET to identify more precisely the issues involved with respect to assessment tasks and associated guidelines. 3. To review and revise current assessment tasks and guidelines with support from LET and update documentation accordingly. 4. To run a series of staff training sessions in relation to setting assessment tasks and developing clear assessment guidelines associated with each task. 5. To develop and implement more robust processes for quality assurance of the setting of assessments. <p>[Visit Secretary's Note: see note above in 3.6 on Learning Enhancement]</p>	Chair BoS	<p>1&2: Set meeting timeline and have first meeting by end of autumn term 16.</p> <p>3: By end of spring term (please note time line for PGT modules may be later due to updating for pedagogy)</p> <p>4-5: By end of summer term 2017; implement any changes by next academic</p>	

				year	
3.10	<p>Reconsider the existing approach to the provision of advice on assessment tasks in undergraduate and Postgraduate Diploma programmes, or otherwise take robust steps as a matter of urgency to ensure that advice is both clear to students and clearly related to marking criteria.</p>	<p>A new model of academic supervision has been implemented for all new and current students on professional programmes:</p> <p>A number of student-centred activities have been implemented which together aim to improve the quality of academic support from the outset of each module to receipt of results and summative feedback (including resubmissions).</p> <p>Changes are predicated on the empowerment of module leaders to lead module teams, particularly in terms of strengthening the provision of academic support related to subject content as well as feedback on formative and summative assessments. This is a significant change as hitherto these responsibilities sat with the personal supervisor.</p> <p>(i) students are provided with clear written and verbal information on assessment guidelines.</p> <p>(ii) students can post questions related to module content and assessment and</p>	Chair UGPB	October 2016	The new model of support will be reviewed throughout the year.

	<p>receive timely responses from module leader and team on the module VLE 'discussion board'.</p> <p>(iii) students are briefed on how they can prepare for the assessment support session.</p> <p>(iv) students are invited to attend a module assessment support session (supported by module teaching team) facilitated by the module leader facilitates relating to content of written assignments, presentations or examinations.</p> <p>(v) students are provided with an opportunity to view exemplar scripts of previous written summative assignments, criteria for marking oral and poster presentations and past examination papers at a timely schedule within the module programme.</p> <p>(vi) students are provided with an opportunity to submit a formative draft section or plan of presentation or written assignment at a date specified on the module assessment schedule.</p> <p>(vii) students are provided with individual</p>		
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		<p>written feedback on formative work within two weeks of submission.</p> <p>(ix) students will receive quality summative feedback, feed-forward and annotations that have been monitored by module leader/moderator.</p> <p>(x) students who have failed at first submission of an assessment are provided an opportunity to attend a revision session facilitated by the module leader scheduled at least one week after the students' receipt of results. At these sessions students will have an opportunity to receive guidance on understanding feedback, reflect on their feedback and prepare for their resubmission.</p>		
3.13	Work with the Learning Enhancement Team (LET) to revise published marking criteria in order to provide greater clarity for students, whilst ensuring that the criteria were appropriately aligned with assessment guidelines and learning outcomes.	<p>Meeting of LET with Chair's BOE (UG/PG) and Deputy Head of Professional Programmes to discuss how all documentation may be more clearly aligned.</p> <p>Develop and revise, where appropriate, more tailored marking criteria for different modules and difference assessment formats in collaboration with LET but also ensuring compliance with PRSB regulations</p> <p>[Visit Secretary's Note: see note above in 3.6 on</p>	Deputy Head of Professional Programmes	Update for start of 2017/18 academic year

		<i>Learning Enhancement]</i>			
3.15	Take further steps to improve the consistency and quality of feedback on assessed work, ensuring that this feedback was related to students' performance on the marking criteria.	<p>1. Work with LET to conduct an internal review of feedback. Initially a selection of modules will be identified that use different assessment formats and an audit of feedback across all programmes will be carried out as well as how the marking grid, and feed forward sections are used and the media by which feedback is provided.</p> <p>2. Through staff-student forums discuss the result of the audit and consult further about the issues they have with feedback.</p> <p>3. Update the marking grid and feedback forms, where appropriate, this will also be in accordance with action 3.13 and the revision of marking criteria. Consult with LET over updates.</p> <p>4. Work with LET to run staff training sessions about how to give high quality feedback</p> <p>5. To set up systems for annual review of feedback</p> <p>[Visit Secretary's Note: see note above in 3.6 on Learning Enhancement]</p>	Chair BoS	<p>1&2: End of spring term 2017</p> <p>3: End of summer term 2017</p> <p>4&5: changes to be brought in for 2017/18</p>	
3.19	Develop and introduce a more robust system for quality assurance of examination papers.	To consult with other departments and SCA over best practice for review of exam papers and QA mechanisms.	Chairs BoE (UG/PG)	<p>End of summer term 2017;</p> <p>process to be</p>	

				brought in for 2017/18	
3.21	Consider whether to amend the schedule and format of assessment on Masters in Public Health and Masters in Applied Health Research programmes in order to allow opportunities to formatively practice summative assessment types and to build on feedback.	The assessment schedule has been updated already this year to take into account timings of formative and summative assessments. Programme specific assessment schedules have also been produced for this academic year. We will further review through the implementation of the pedagogy and updating of the programme specifications.	Chair GSB	End of spring term 2017	
3.23	Investigate and as necessary address the reported examples of repeat teaching in its Masters programmes.	A review of all module content/sessions will be conducted as part of the programme mapping exercise. Any considerable overlap will be reported to module leaders and they will be asked to update modules accordingly.	Chair GSB	End of summer term 2017	This has already been looked at for the MPH modules and there have been changes for 2016/17
3.24	Establish a means to ensure that Masters students are aware of synergies between modules when making module choices.	Programme leaders will discuss this with students in induction for 16/17 and preliminary supervisory sessions in the autumn term. Further work will be carried as part of the pedagogy and handbooks will be updated to reflect any changes and to provide further guidance.	Chair of GSB	End of autumn term 2017 in preparation for 2017/18 academic year.	Module titles and prohibited combinations were reviewed for 2016/17. The programme leader for the MPH held a meeting over the summer which addressed some of this for the public health modules.

4.3	Establish a means to ensure continuity of pastoral support for taught postgraduate students.	<p>This relates mainly to PT students and will be reviewed during the academic year in consultation with student reps through the staff-student forum and through further consultation with students.</p> <p>We will also explore the programme structure for PT students and identify key time points when additional pastoral support may be required. Worth noting that there is considerable heterogeneity within PGT population as well as their requirements for support.</p>	Chair of GSB	End of summer term 2017	This has been discussed at Dissertation Development Committee and PT students have been invited to induction for 2016/17 to help with continued support
4.10	Review and improve guidance for the Pebblepad system such that students and mentors are more confident in using it, both technically and in relation to understanding the required content.	<p>Department to review and update guidance for PebblePad and will consult with all stakeholders to identify issues.</p> <p>Identify a PebblePad Champion</p>	Deputy Head of Professional Programmes & Practice Experience Support Team	End of summer term 2017; changes to be brought in for 2017/18	
4.11	Endeavour to establish means to ensure students can access necessary IT systems whilst on placement.	A review of the IT support required by students on placement will be carried out to identify what the IT issues are whether they relate to VLE and Pebblepad or more general IT access. Following which mechanisms by which to support students will be identified and communicated to students through the student handbook and student intranet	Deputy Head of Professional Programmes & Head of IT	End of summer term 2017	

5.6	Work towards establishing a workload model for its staff. This might include the model being developed centrally.	The Department has three distinct groups of staff that contribute to teaching. Will aim to capture teaching activity and across programmes in 2016/17 across the three staff groups (Note this will also capture external teaching activity). It's worth noting that there are likely to be further changes to the SSPRD contract which will have significant implications for the Dept.	Department Manager& HoD	Pilot to be developed for 2017/18 academic year.	
5.8	Work with ASO to check that all core aspects of the remit of Boards of Study are captured within its committee terms of reference, and in particular that mechanisms are in place for senior staff involvement in review of NSS results and APR and that programme-level changes were still reported to senior committees.	To meet with ASO to identify areas of concern and work through TOR for key committees and how information is cascaded and to amend TOR accordingly.	Strategic Project & Development Manager & Deputy HoD (PG programmes)	End of summer term 2017	
5.13	Work with the Faculty Operations Manager to highlight specific problems with student records systems and refer these to University I.T. Services as appropriate.	Consult with relevant colleagues in DOHS about student records systems and identify key areas for discussion and those that are a priority to fix that are causing a risk to the Dept Discuss findings with Faculty operations manager and identify ways to improve systems and a timeline for any changes	Head of IT	End of spring term 2017	

6.4	Investigate the possibility of space in Alcuin College (such as access to the JCR) being made available to its students.	Liaise with Alcuin College over used of space.	Chairs of BoS & Student Services Manager	Complete	Access to the Alcuin JCR for undergraduate nursing and midwifery students has been secured. Students are asked to transfer their college membership to Alcuin College.
6.6	Work with the Head of Colleges to investigate how pre-registration students could be better integrated into college communities.	Consult with students about their needs, wants and requirements through staff-student forum and working with Departmental rep. Further work will be done with Head of Colleges and Student Forums to develop this further. A meeting will be organised with Head of Colleges to move this forward and what part the Dept can play to support	Student Services Manager	End of spring term 2017	Work in process with Alcuin College to attract mature undergraduate nursing and midwifery students to participate in college activities such as PG supper evenings and child friendly activities.
7.4	Ensure that it procedures are in place to appropriately induct postgraduate research students who do not commence their studies at the start of the academic year.	To create a mini-induction for new students and to use the VLE site that is set up for October starters more effectively. <i>YGRS PPSC M16-17/22: Section 7.4 - the department should be informed that the recording of the PGR Welcome Event from October 2016 was now available to view online and that a smaller January welcome event would also be forthcoming from 2017/18 onwards</i>	Deputy HoD (PG programmes)	End of autumn term 2016	
7.7	Clarify to staff and students the arrangements for use of taught modules in	For new students, discussions over module choices and their timing will be conducted during	Deputy HoD (PG	End of summer	

	PGR training requirements, including the possibility of exemption from assessment, ensuring a consistent approach.	the admissions cycle as opposed to induction as limited time to choose options. Further discussions will take place at Research Degrees Committee and handbook and induction sessions for PGR updated accordingly.	programmes) and Chair of Research Degrees Committee	term 2017; changes in process to be brought in for new cohort of students	
7.9	Establish means to build a more integrated community among postgraduate research students across its sites.	1.Review existing space that PhD students occupy and looking at trying to make improvements to create, in the first instance, communities in each site. 2.Organise annual conference for all students to present 3.Organise termly get together for all PhD students using alternative sites.	1.Deputy HoD (PG programmes) & Departmental Manager 2.Chair of Research Degrees Committee 3.Student Services	End of summer term 2017	PhD students are already part of the new contract research forum and are invited to events run by this group
7.12	Publicise (or re-publicise) details of student representation for postgraduate research students	Once new reps are advertised to ensure that web-page are updated and that an email is sent out to all students.	Student Services Manager	End of autumn term 2016	
7.14	Clarify understanding of NMC restrictions on teaching responsibilities, with a view to expanding teaching opportunities for PhD	The NMC restrictions are clear in relation to who can and cannot teach, however, there may have been some confusion within the Department. A	Chair BoS	End of summer term 2017 in	

	students if possible	clear message will be communicated to staff through BoS about what is and isn't permissible. In addition, staff will be encouraged to identify where there may be additional opportunities for PGWT to teach and contribute to the pre-registration programmes.		preparation for 2017/18.	
<i>University-Level Recommendations:</i>					
2.6	UTC / ASO to consider establishing a means to facilitate programme approval and approval of major modifications in the summer vacation.	To be considered by Academic Quality team in light of broader changes to modifications / programme approval process.	AQ team	Autumn Term 2016	<i>UTC M16-17/36: The Committee considered the recommendation to UTC/ASO to consider establishing a means to facilitate programme approval and approval of major modifications during the summer vacation. The Chair reported that, in the past, this had been done by chair's action or via extraordinary UTC meetings. The Chair confirmed that UTC would continue to facilitate programme approval during the summer vacation in this way. The Sciences Faculty Learning and Teaching Group, which was now responsible</i>

					<i>for the approval of major modifications for Health Sciences programmes, had indicated that it would approve major modifications (and the planning case for new programmes) over the summer vacation via chair's action.</i>
5.11	The Faculty Operations Manager to work with the Department, Timetabling and other central services as appropriate to understand and meet the needs of the Department over the summer vacation with respect to timetabling.	The Faculty Operations Manager will raise this with the Head of Accommodation and Timetabling	Rebekah Desport & Department Manager	For next timetabling round	<i>UTC M16-17/36:</i> <i>It was noted that two of the other University-level actions related to meeting the needs of the Department over the summer vacation. It was</i>

6.7	<p>The Faculty Operations Manager and Department work with University Accommodation Services to ensure the accommodation needs of the Department's students are appropriately met.</p>	<p>The Faculty Operations Manager will raise this with the Head of Accommodation and Timetabling</p>	<p>Rebekah Desport & Student Services Manager</p>		<p><i>reported that the needs of students during the summer vacation was regularly considered at Student Life Committee. The University-level actions relating to timetabling (ref. 5.11) and accommodation (ref. 6.7) would be taken forward by the Faculty Operations Manager.</i></p> <p><i>The Committee observed that the need to ensure continuity for students outside term time was not specific to the Department of Health Sciences. Members were aware that the absence of Ethics Committee meetings during the summer vacation caused PGR students some difficulty (and could potentially delay the start of research). The GSA representative was asked to make the Chair aware of other key areas which were delayed by the summer governance structures.</i></p>
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7.10	The York Graduate Research School to address the Department's concerns about the impact on its student community of having students housed across multiple sites in its broader review of PGR space.	(To be considered by YGRS when the main report is considered by the YGRS PPC committee).	Tom Stoneham	Autumn Term 2016 committee	YGRS PPSC M16-17/22: <i>Section 7.10 - the Committee noted the ongoing issues of space and that this general issue was being handled by University Executive Board.</i>
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