



## **Senate**

**Subject:** Validated programmes at Loughborough College

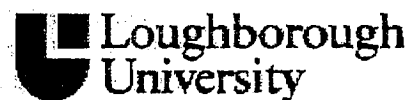
**Origin:** Learning and Teaching Committee, 6 November 2008

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It was resolved to recommend to Senate the introduction of a new version of the Honours 'top-up' degree at Loughborough College to lead to the degree of BSc in Applied Sports Science (Management) for validation with effect from session 2009/10.

*Secretary's Note*

The above recommendation should be read in conjunction with paras.1 – 11 of the attached paper.



## Learning and Teaching Committee

### Report of a Validation Panel on proposals from Loughborough College for strategic changes to existing validated programmes

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#### Background

1. During the summer of 2008, Loughborough College brought forward two sets of programme changes of a 'strategic' nature. These were:
  - The addition of a pathway in Applied Sports Science (Management) to the BSc Honours 'top-up' degree
  - The introduction of a 2-year full-time version of the FD in Sports Performance (Football) alongside the existing 3-year part-time version. (Both versions are by distance learning.)
2. In accordance with agreed procedures, outline proposals were submitted to Operations Committee in the first instance for in principle approval. Operations Committee gave its approval and invited Learning and Teaching Committee to set up a validation panel to consider the proposals in more detail.
3. LTC members were invited by correspondence to comment on any matters of principle or issues of potential concern raised by the proposals – no issues were raised - before a validation panel was established with the following membership:

Professor Morag Bell, PVC(T) – Chair  
Dr Paul Byrne, AD(T) SSH  
Professor John Dickens, AD(T) Engineering as a member of LTC  
Robert Bowyer, Programme Quality Team Manager

Subject adviser: David Bunker, SSES

4. The panel met on Monday 20 October 2008 at Loughborough College and held discussions with the responsible HE/curriculum area staff, namely

Sheryl Cottam  
Elaine Locke  
Helen van Aardt

#### BSc Honours in Applied Sports Science (one-year 'top-up' degree): introduction of Applied Sports Science (Management) pathway

5. In addition to the outline proposals, the panel received a proposed programme specification, programme regulations and module specifications.

6. It was noted that the University and College had always envisaged a need for the Honours top-up degree, which was first approved as a progression route for the Foundation Degree students in Sports Science, to be modified as new FD programmes in sport, exercise and fitness came on stream, in order to ensure an appropriate 'fit' with the work completed by students at FD level. The new pathway would become the progression route to Honours for students who had completed a Foundation Degree in either Sports Science with Sports Management, or Exercise, Health and Fitness with Management. Students with Foundation Degrees in either Sports Science or Sports Coaching would follow the Applied Sports Science route.
7. Students following the Applied Sports Science (Management) pathway would take compulsory 20-credit modules in Financial Management and Accounting in Sport and Exercise (new module) and Marketing in Sport and Exercise (a previously existing module which would now be confined to the Management pathway). They would take a compulsory 30-credit project and select optional modules to a value of 50 credits from amongst modules already validated for the Applied Sports Science degree.
8. The panel agreed that the Management pathway provided a valuable alternative progression route for Foundation Degree holders and that it would recommend its introduction to LTC and Senate for validation.
9. It was noted that the way in which the Management pathway had been incorporated into the existing programme documentation meant that the distinctiveness of the two routes appeared unbalanced and the distinctive features of the Applied Sports Science route without Management were not highlighted. This was compounded by the fact that the Sports Science Support for Elite Athletes module, which was compulsory for Applied Sports Science, would also be available as an option for students on the Management pathway. The College staff were asked to give further consideration to the desirability of heightening the distinctiveness of the two routes, and to adjusting the intended learning outcomes in the programme specification to bring out the different expectations of the students.
10. In its scrutiny of the documentation, the panel raised a number of points which required further attention by the College, as set out below:

In the programme specification:

- (i) Section 2: should indicate which subject benchmark statement(s) had been used; 'National Qualifications Framework' should be deleted.
- (ii) Section 4 (and in module specifications): 'JS' needed to be replaced as internal examiner, having left the College.
- (iii) Section 5: it should be clarified that a minimum average mark of 55% in Part B modules was required; reference should be included to the FDs in Exercise, Health and Fitness with Management, and Sports Coaching; and the second bullet point concerning the bridging modules should be clarified by using the note that appeared in Section 4.
- (iv) Section 6: the sentence referring to a Pass Degree should be deleted; the University no longer permitted Programme Boards to raise degree classification thresholds and the relevant statement should be amended to say that thresholds may be *lowered* by not more than 3%.

- (v) Section 8: the reference to a bridging week for FD students moving to the top-up degree should be deleted pending further discussion of the possibility that this be made a requirement; the paragraph referring to staff use of ILT needed updating and revision; the paragraph on staff development should refer to the possibility of staff availing themselves of development activities in the University.
- (vi) Section 9: was duplicated and should follow the paragraphs on particular support for learning.

In the programme regulations:

- (vii) The maximum duration for of the programme if taken on a part-time basis should, in the view of the panel, be 3 years.
- (viii) The entry requirements should be amended in line with Section 5 of the programme specification.
- (ix) The final two paragraphs on reassessment should be deleted, as they duplicated material in the preceding two paragraphs.

In the module specifications:

- (x) The credit level of the bridging modules would be more appropriately be Level 5.
- (xi) The versions of the previously validated modules presented to the panel were not those approved by the AD(T). In particular, the 'Methods of teaching, learning and assessment' field in most cases required correction.

11. It was **resolved to recommend to Learning and Teaching Committee** that the proposed introduction of a programme leading to the Honours degree of BSc in Applied Sports Science (Management) be approved for validation with effect from session 2009/10, subject to the College making the amendments to documentation noted above to the satisfaction of the AD(T) SSH.

## **2-year full-time version of the FD in Sports Performance (Football) (Distance Learning)**

12. In addition to the outline proposals, the panel received a supportive letter from Tom Curtis, Head Football Coach at the University; a letter from Myra Nimmo, Head of SSES, supporting the proposals in principle; an outline of the support that would be available for students on the programme in terms of online learning materials, tutorial time and formative assessment methods; and the programme specification, programme regulations and module specifications for the existing 3-year version of the programme.
13. It was noted that the 3-year version of the Sports Performance (Football) FD had been validated in 2007. Recruitment to the programme had been deferred while further discussions took place with the relevant national bodies and clubs concerning the particular needs of elite football players who formed the target market. It was felt that the 3-year version would not cater for the needs of young talented players released from clubs, who were looking for further structured training and coaching in their sport as well as higher education qualifications. The 2-year version was centred around a partnership with Loughborough Students Football to provide an elite training programme for the players during their studies, for which the players/students would be based in Loughborough. It was noted that players had to be

registered as full-time students to play for Loughborough Students FC in BUCS matches. To accommodate 1200 notional learning hours (120 credits) as well as the performance development programme in each of the two years, the programme would be structured across 48 weeks, from 1 August to 30 June including 8 weeks off season. All modules would be by partial distance learning, with contact hours blocked at set times during the semester. The College submitted plans showing how Part A of the programme might be scheduled across the year, and how the programme delivery might be timetabled alongside the training and competition schedule.

14. The panel discussed the demand for the programme, noting that the size of intake was limited by the scope for participation in the Loughborough Students training programme. Members noted the extra workload that it would generate for staff, as the 2-year and 3-year versions of the programme would need to be delivered and assessed separately, and queried whether the College had sufficient resources available. The panel also queried whether the delivery plans were realistic, in terms of the demands they placed on the students.
15. It was noted that students on the 2-year programme would in fact have more face-to-face contact with tutors than students on the 3-year version who were not in Loughborough, and more opportunities for obtaining feedback. The number of taught hours, and in most cases the learning and teaching methods, for each module would be the same for both 2-year and 3-year programmes.
16. The panel concluded that it would be premature at this point to recommend the introduction of the 2-year version of the programme to Learning and Teaching Committee. Further information and documentation was needed on a number of points.
  - (i) A sharper and more convincing rationale for the 2-year programme.
  - (ii) Documentation comparing the delivery and assessment schedules for the 2-year and 3-year versions.
  - (iii) An assessment of the additional resources needed to cope with the delivery and assessment schedules for both versions, as well as the additional pastoral support for the students, and assurances that such resources would be available.
  - (iv) Programme documentation amended as appropriate (programme specification, regulations, module specifications) to differentiate between the two versions.
17. The panel felt it important that there should be only one entry point during the year for the 3-year version.
18. The panel would reconvene to consider the proposal further, once the College had provided the further information and documentation requested.

#### **General issues**

19. The panel was concerned whether sufficient administrative support was available to the College teaching staff, in the light of increasing student numbers, and the volume and complexity of programme documentation and associated QA procedures. It welcomed the news that a new HE

administrator had very recently been appointed and would be taking up post shortly.

20. In the light of the introduction of additional validated programmes and increasing student numbers, the panel felt it would be timely to consider the appointment of an additional external examiner.
21. The panel was not aware of the approval route for new programmes within the College, prior to their presentation to the University (or other external bodies) for validation, and asked that information be sought about this.