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**Learning and Teaching Committee**

**Subject: Loughborough College Validation Sub-Committee**

**Origin: Secretary**

The University validates five distinct Foundation Degree programmes in the area of Sport, Exercise and Fitness at Loughborough College, as well as two one-year ‘top-up’ programmes leading to Honours degrees for successful FD graduates. Our validation agreement commenced with one FD programme in 2001 and has developed from there.

Under our procedures for the approval, monitoring and review of validated programmes, once Senate approves a recommendation from LTC that validation should proceed, it is required to assign responsibility for the programmes concerned to a University Faculty Board and to designate a cognate academic department to support the programme validation arrangements on an ongoing basis. The Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences fulfil these roles in respect of the Loughborough College programmes.

The cognate University department is expected to nominate a member of academic staff to act as link-person with the programme team in the partner organisation and, primarily through the link-person, to assume responsibility for providing at minimum the following support:

* Liaison over the appointment of external examiner(s) for the programme: normally extending the remit of one or more of the department’s existing externals
* Attendance at programme boards in the partner institution
* Advising staff in the partner institution about academic standards including the marking of student work: this might entail sampling the marking of a range of work at different levels of the programme
* Invitations to the staff in the partner institution to observe practice in the department by attending meetings/events
* Helping to identify staff development needs
* Offering advice on programme design and content, and on methods of teaching, learning and assessment (avoiding the approval role of the ADT in respect of programme changes)
* Inputting to APR/PPR processes
* Offering comment on information provided for students

Until the end of 2008/09 Dr David Bunker acted as the link-person from SSEHS and David Stead has taken over this role in 2009/10.

The AD(T) SSH conducts Annual Programme Reviews and reports on these through the Faculty Board in the same way as for internal SSH departments. A Periodic Programme Review would be chaired by the Dean of SSH (although on the last occasion it was amalgamated with a revalidation exercise which was led by the PVC(T)). The AD(T) approves the annual update of module and programme specifications and programme regulations. He also approves the appointment of External Examiners on behalf of the Faculty Board.

The academic quality framework for validated programmes is supported by Robert Bowyer as Head of the Programme Quality and Teaching Partnerships Office of the Registry. Senate has approved Regulations for Validated Undergraduate Awards (HE in UK Colleges of Further Education) and there is a Handbook for Validated Provision. Outline module specifications are input to LUSI, as are relevant student data. This enables the Student Records & Examinations Office to provide mark sheets and other documentation for College Programme Boards, and eventually to produce transcripts and certificates for the College students graduating from the validated programmes.

Alongside the formal arrangements described above, meetings have been held from time to time between the University and the College, typically involving the AD(T), the Head of the PQTP Office, and the SSEHS link-person from the University, and the Senior Manager for HE and the Head of the Curriculum Team from the College, on items such as possible programme developments, changes in assessment strategy, changes in programme and general regulations, and changes in personnel, where the College has sought informal advice and guidance on University practice before proceeding with more formal proposals. There have also been meetings to discuss College use of the University Library, Student Services such as the Careers Centre, and Teaching Centre support for staff development, which have a major bearing on the partnership but remain outside the terms of the formal validation agreement and current financial arrangements.

It is suggested that it would help to strengthen the partnership arrangements between the University and the College and underline the commitment on both sides if there were established a Validation Sub-Committee where such issues could be more routinely discussed and which could take a broad oversight of the quality management arrangements in place as the partnership continues to develop. The last QAA institutional audit identified the management of quality and standards of collaborative provision as an area of potential weakness, and the establishment of such a committee would help to strengthen the strategic oversight and overall management of our partnership with the College.

The intention would be for the committee to report to LTC. The support provided by SSEHS as link-department; the approval, monitoring and review procedures undertaken by the Faculty Board or the AD()T) on its behalf; and the administrative support provided by the Registry would continue. The International Foundation Programme would remain outside the remit of the committee.

**LTC is invited to give approval in principle to the establishment of a Validation Sub-Committee for HE programmes at Loughborough College.**

Subject to approval, proposals for membership and terms of reference will be brought to the next meeting.