

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 23 November 2007

**Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:
Responses to the Recommendations Arising from the Review of the
Department of Adult and Continuing Education held on 30 April and
1 May 2006**

Ms Jane McAllister, Academic Policy Manager

October 2007

Conclusions

The Review Panel commended the Department on the diversity and quality of its provision and for the high level of support provided to a wide range of students. Staff and students met by the Panel displayed loyalty and commitment to the Department and its activities. The Panel was pleased to conclude that there was a greater degree of integration with the rest of the University that had been apparent from the Self Evaluation Report and hoped that the increasing tendency for mainstream undergraduate students to gain some of their credits through DACE courses would assist this process.

Recommendations

The recommendations listed below were made in the spirit of encouragement to the Department of Adult and Continuing Education to address the issues identified by the Panel.

Recommendation 1:

The Panel recommended that, as a matter of urgency, the Department examine the timing and duration of its programmes, especially the Open Programme, with a view to changing the timings and duration of the Open Courses so that they coincide with periods when ITE Students would be on school placements and considerably more rooms would be available in the St Andrew's Building [*Paragraph C.4.1*]

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Dean of Faculty of Education**

Response: From the Department

The recommendation that DACE make use of rooms in the St. Andrew's Building during the periods when Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students are not around has been discussed by internal staff and between the HOD and the Dean of the Faculty of Education. It is felt that availability of accommodation should not unduly drive the shape and nature of the programme. The essential starting point for the provision of vibrant programmes should be the real and expressed interests/needs of adult students in the Greater Glasgow area.

However, DACE welcomes the suggestion that we offer short courses at points when rooms are more readily available and we will make attempts to use the facilities on a pilot basis during the recommended periods. For instance, Stuart Campbell, the co-ordinator for the Music Open Programme, has suggested that in the coming year we offer some music courses when there is less demand on the scarce music facilities.

Recommendation 2:

The Panel recommended that the development of a wider and more structured pathway to a part-time degree be expedited as soon as possible [*Paragraph B*]

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching)**

Response: From the Department

As noted in the report of the review panel, DACE has contributed extensively to the University's policies and strategies concerning social inclusion and widening participation, exemplified by the DACE Head of Department's presence on the University Recruitment, Admissions and Participation Committee.

DACE is at the forefront of this University's agenda for the enhancement of part-time study and flexible learning. One of its central tenets is to make University study more accessible to adult students, especially those from traditionally disenfranchised sectors of the Greater Glasgow community. Part-time study is the only viable route for most adults who have complex and busy lives who engage in a myriad of social roles, including full-time work. The whole lifelong learning agenda of the Scottish Executive is geared towards opening up opportunity for people throughout their lives, not just in their teenage years. A multi-skilled and competitive workforce relies on the availability of sustained learning throughout life; similarly, an informed citizenry needs opportunity for up-to-date knowledge and enhanced debate on issues affecting Scotland.

Through many of its programmes, but especially through the current Certificate in Higher Education, adult students gain access to the beginning stages of a degree. The Certificate of Higher Education, which is attracting increasing numbers of students' enrolments, enables mature students to gain credit for undergraduate studies undertaken in daytime, evening and weekend formats. There is an urgent need, recognised by the DPTLA panel, to provide more coherent pathways towards a full degree to match the learning agendas of mature-aged students.

The Head of Department and selected staff from DACE have been in discussion with the Dean of Education to further extend current provision to adults in a flexible learning mode. The Dean is keen to offer a new degree within the Faculty of Education which builds on existing strengths not only of DACE (for instance, in the liberal arts and environmental science) but of other staff in the wider Faculty to help meet the demand. In effect, students who complete a Certificate in Higher Education could complete a degree within the Faculty in an environment conducive to their adult student inclinations. Should such a programme prove successful, then other faculties may wish to co-operate with DACE to encourage more mature-aged students into their programmes.

Response: From the Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching)

This was discussed in some detail in 2005 at the June meeting of Education Planning & Strategy committee. The Vice Principal along with others (including the Academic

Secretary) have considered further the availability of programmes for part-time students, as highlighted in the prospectus for part-time students. Most recently a study was undertaken to identify and described in more detail the needs of all our students in relation to enhanced flexibility. These results will be reported through EdPSC. The department is encouraged to develop courses that progress on to degree programmes in a range of Faculties.

Recommendation 3:

The Panel recommended that consideration be given to unifying responsibility for mature student access and part-time degree recruitment and admissions possibly through DACE. [*Paragraph C.5.1*]

**For the attention of: Academic Secretary
Dean of Faculty of Education**

Response: From the Dean of the Faculty of Education

The Dean has met with the Head of Department to discuss this issue but little progress has been made to date. The Recruitment, Admissions and Participation Service, and possibly the Vice Principal (Learning Teaching & Internationalisation), will need to be involved in future discussions to take the matter forward.

Recommendation 4:

The Panel recommended that applicants applying to the Access programme should be more rigorously counselled with regard to the demands of the course and that there should be an increased vigilance over Access students with a view to improving the retention rate. [*Paragraph C.5.3*]

**For the attention of: Guidance Officer
Access Co-ordinator
Head of Department**

Response: From the Department

We in DACE certainly agree there is an issue here that deserves continuing attention. We believe, however, that we already make significant efforts to give prospective students a realistic sense of the demands of the Access programme. We are also conscious of the need not to deter unnecessarily people who may already be approaching a return to study with some trepidation. We already refer students who miss a couple of weeks to the Guidance Officer, for her to follow up and determine whether there is any issue we can offer help with. Rather than substantially revise our interview and counselling procedures, in ways that are not clear to us, we would prefer to put the emphasis on providing a wider range of experiences prior to Access. The taster day, a recent innovation at the time of the DPTLA, is one of the channels for achieving this objective. Slimmed-down, outreach taster days are currently in development to take this experience to convenient locations outside the walls of the institution.

The new Foundation for Access courses, not discussed at the DPTLA, also give people a chance to try out academic study and Access over a shorter period before committing themselves to the full course of study. We will also institute the practice of writing to all who enrolled but did not complete the programme inviting them to re-apply and/or

come back to see us to discuss their future options. We believe that these and similar innovations best address the issue identified by the panel.

We believe that the notion of “retention” for Access is especially problematic. At what point does one decide whether a person has withdrawn? There are several points in the process of academic acculturation where students make decisions to continue or leave – after a taster day; after getting through enrolment; at the time of the first assignment; when demand for assignments reaches a peak. Even when students complete the programme, they may decide not to pursue higher education because of the impact of life transitions. Alternatively, they may defer entry to a programme for a few years. Hence, a straight statistical analysis hides the complexities of retention.

Recommendation 5:

The Panel recommended that Course Representatives be appointed for all programmes except the Open & Language Programmes and that the Course Representatives be encouraged to undertake the training provided through the SRC and to participate in course meetings at least twice a year. [*Paragraph E.2*]

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Course Leaders**

Response: From the Department

The Department endeavours to appoint course representatives for almost all courses, including the open and language programmes. (The only exceptions are the BACD/BCLD where whole class discussions are held). It also widely broadcasts the Student Representatives’ Council (SRC) training (at least from session 2006/07) and it has been taken up in a few cases.

All programme leaders are encouraged to hold at least two meetings per year and to otherwise follow the University’s code of practice.

In common with other parts of the University, and with comparable departments in other institutions, students tend to be reluctant to put themselves forward as reps. A large proportion of them are attending perhaps one class per year, amounting to only two hours per week. Their commitment to formal learning is intermittent and more casual. They are usually older than the average student, and have jobs (sometimes full-time), families, and other community responsibilities.

We endeavour to increase the level of interest in the opportunities available to students through the student representative system. To this end, the Department will welcome the proposed introduction of the Senate Office/SRC briefing which can be given to all students at the start of the year and help ensure that standard and relevant information is given to them.

With respect to Access students, the timing of training is currently too early. Access classes need a chance to settle so that informed recommendations for representation can occur. Should semester one dates continue to prove unsuitable, student representatives will be invited to participate in appropriate training at the start of semester two.

Recommendation 6:

The Panel recommended that consideration be given to student inclusion in Departmental Committees where appropriate and that an overarching DACE Staff/Student Liaison Committee be formed. [*Paragraph E.2*]

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Course Leaders**

Response: From the Department

In some cases, students do attend the relevant departmental committee (Access, Postgraduate), but in others, largely because of organisational issues, this does not happen. Any available notes from the Staff-Student Liaison Committees are passed on to the relevant committee and steps will be taken to ensure that this loop is closed.

Consideration has been given by all course co-ordinators to the second recommendation, that an overarching DACE staff/student liaison committee be formed. Enthusiasm for this idea is tempered by the reality that it is difficult to get reps to attend their own course committees and we feel that it may be even harder to attract reps to a bigger, more general committee. There is also the question about whether the new committee would replace the old course committees, not least to reduce the burden of committee meetings on both students and staff and this was not thought useful. Most programmes have a cohesive identity, and the students have issues in common, so it is productive for the students (or those who will follow after them) as they feel they can affect how things develop in their programme. It would not be useful or appropriate to deal with detailed programme matters in a bigger committee. From the students' point of view, the overarching committee would have a less clear purpose.

DACE students constitute a very disparate group, both in their backgrounds and in the character of the programmes they are taking. The Department does not take the view that they would have enough DACE-related concerns in common to make meeting as one group valuable. Their motivations and needs vary considerably.

Finally, there would be exceptional difficulty in finding dates and times which would be suitable for all or most student reps (attending, as they do, anything from two hours one day or evening per week, to day-release, to full time, to intensive two-week sessions etc).

Further consideration has been given to the possibility of an annual meeting for all reps to meet with staff. This has some advantages, although primarily, we feel, for the Department rather than the students. Its purpose would be to gather a snap-shot indication of how students consider that their learning needs have been met by the Department, what facilities they have found useful or not, their views with regard to articulation with the rest of the University, and other general questions. This has the potential to help DACE greatly with student support issues and steps will be taken to pilot this in 2007/08.

Should students feel aggrieved about any aspect of their learning experience within DACE, the department has an established complaints procedure consistent with the University's protocol. In effect, issues are dealt with as close as possible to where the issue occurs and only when these deliberations fail does the more formal procedure come into effect.

In conjunction with developments in the Faculty of Education, considerable recent effort has been placed on renewing the DACE/Faculty web pages to make them more appealing to prospective students and information has been organised in a fashion consistent with a student's line of enquiry. For example, blank evaluation forms and details of the complaints procedure can be found there. By this means we intend to help to meet students' needs to convey problems or to provide feedback to the Department. Students have been involved in testing the utility of the website and we remain responsive to constructive feedback to carry out further changes to improve its effectiveness for students.

Recommendation 7:

The Panel recommended that ILOs be developed for all programmes and courses. [Paragraph C.2]

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Course Leaders**

Response: From the Department

While DACE concurs with the intention behind the specific recommendation to develop Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for all courses and programmes, there are theoretical and practical difficulties in implementation related to what constitutes a “course” or a “programme”. Not every learning event or sequence of activities can be pinned down to specific pre-determined outcomes, as leading educationalists remind us. The extensive range of courses in DACE and the sheer diversity of the student body make it very difficult to implement this recommendation practically in a standardised fashion.

The DACE Programme Management Development Group (PMDG), in considering this recommendation, points to the fact that currently all individual courses on the Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE) programme have ILOs. The majority of Open Programme courses already have ILOs listed against them, given that it is now a requirement for new course proposals that ILOs be stated. New undergraduate programmes developed in the past two years, for instance, those in the BA Community Development, have individual programme specifications. Most Faculties in the University of Glasgow do not provide individual programme specifications for Certificate or Diploma level outcomes but rather these awards are included as part of the overall programme structure for a full honours programme. In light of this reality, we feel it may be more appropriate for a single programme specification to be produced for the Certificate of Higher Education award in DACE. It is therefore intended to consult the Undergraduate Studies Committee at the start of Session 2007-2008 in drawing up such a programme specification for the following session.

In terms of the Access programme, ILOs are being devised for the programme as a whole. They will be useful in helping us to keep the programme on track and as a guide for prospective new tutors. We note, however, that they will be more general in character, as befits a programme spanning 18 different academic subjects. Only at the level of individual subject options can ILOs play the role envisaged for them in the Code of Assessment. Our experience in abortively trying to draw up programme specifications for the CertHE courses appears to bear out this view.

Recommendation 8:

The Panel recommended that assessment in the Open Courses should be reviewed and where necessary rationalised and that innovative methods of assessment, which might encourage students to undertake assessment exercises, should be explored. [Paragraph C.3]

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Open Programme Co-ordinator**

Response: From the Department

The recommendation that we consider the issue of assessment on the Open Programme has been discussed in the PMDG and a number of actions have already been taken to encourage greater participation by students of formal assessment. For example, the

invitation packs sent out to tutors for courses in 2007-2008 contain guidelines and recommendations intended to encourage tutors to be innovative and creative in their approaches to assessment. We are keen to see tutors move away from reliance on traditional essay assignments, to develop a wider repertoire of assessment strategies suitable for the subject being studied. The external examiner for the Open Programme is fully supportive of our efforts in this endeavour. All subject specialists are also aware of the need to encourage more students to consider taking assessment. In addition, tutor-training sessions will include the issue of appropriate assessment for mature-aged students.

Recommendation 9:

The Panel recommended that there should be a DACE Strategic Plan which harmonised with those of the Faculty and the University. *[Paragraph B]*

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Course Leaders**

Response: From the Department

The Head of Department for DACE, appointed to this role in 2006, is conscious of the need for clear direction and innovative modes for programme provision, teaching, research and community interaction. To this end, the focus in recent staff meetings has been upon addressing core values for DACE and a SWOT analysis. At senior management level, an Away Day (31 May) was held where major domains of DACE work were discussed under the headings of past achievements, current successes, major issues and possible futures. These staff events are contributory to the construction a new strategic plan to be finalised at the end of November 2007. This plan will be consistent with wider University priorities (e.g. internationalisation; postgraduate studies) but will also assert the special character of DACE as a major provider of adult learning opportunities in the West of Scotland.

Recommendation 10:

The Panel recommended that that consideration be given to credit rating the Certificate in Counselling Skills. *[Paragraph C.4.5]*

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Course Leaders**

Response: From the Department

The DPTLA review group recommended that the Certificate in Counselling Skills should move towards accreditation. Since this review the professional body which validates this programme (COSCA - Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) have had the generic programme structure and content accredited at 40 credit points, level 7 of the Scottish Qualifications Framework, by Napier University.

It is beneficial to students and tutors to pursue University of Glasgow accreditation on a similar pattern. This process has commenced and the programme is being considered for accreditation at present. One area which has required clarification is whether the University code of assessment is applicable to this course, given that DACE conducts this programme on behalf of COSCA. A proposal has been submitted to Senate, supported by the Undergraduate Studies Committee (UDC), to have the code of assessment partially or wholly waived. The final outcome of this proposal will be

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known in the Summer/Autumn of 2007. Assuming a positive response to the UDC recommendation, the process of accreditation can then commence.

Recommendation 11:

The Panel recommended that the Department review its Postgraduate Taught provision to explore the possibilities of attracting students from overseas; e.g. South America and the Middle East. [*Paragraph C.4.4*]

**For the attention of: Course Leaders
Director of IPS**

Response: From the Department

The national and international marketing of postgraduate provision has received considerable attention over the last year, and is intended to be an area of continuing development to be highlighted in DACE's forthcoming strategic plan.

The MLitt, based in Oman (previously in Dubai), is awaiting final approval from the Ministry of Education there, together with the contract with Mazoon College. Effective marketing of this programme by locals to recruit the first cohort of students will occur subsequent to approval.

The MSc and Diploma (ACE) have been reorganised with an international market in mind. In addition to the popular Teaching Adults strand (an in-service programme for adult and community educators), the traditional more-academically oriented strand has been disentangled from this in-service programme to stand as an independent option. Changes in curriculum for both strands include a course on *International issues in adult and continuing education*. A stronger research component, likely to be attractive to international applicants, has been incorporated within the traditional pathway. Having completed this option, (international) students will be better placed for doctoral study.

It is acknowledged that very effective marketing strategies are key to further progress in international recruitment. Marketing strategies for both the MLitt and the MSc have been developed and continue to be modified, including flyers and pdf information sheets consistent with the Faculty identity.

Recommendation 12:

The Panel recommended that DACE give consideration to developing a welcome pack for all students entering courses run by the Department to provide essential information about the Department, Faculty and University. Where there were differences in the teaching and support available to students taking different courses, these should be clearly spelled out. [*Paragraph C.5.2*]

For the attention of: Head of Department

Response: From the Department

Most students receive a student handbook tailored to their own programme which provides a very detailed description of their programme and facilities available to them.

The exceptions to this to date have been students on ACE courses, language courses and unaccredited courses. ACE students received a leaflet at the start of 06/07. This will be developed further for 07/08, and an equivalent leaflet will be prepared for students on the unaccredited and the language programmes.

DACE also distributes the Students' Representative Council (SRC) booklet to as many students as practicable at the beginning of the academic year. This publication covers essential information to students on University-wide facilities and organisations. In addition, we distribute the booklet "Choose Glasgow" which includes important information for students considering part-time study, inclusive of DACE Certificate in Higher Education programmes.

In terms of staff induction, there is a separate DACE handbook which provides information on facilities, the character of the department, general administration, the University library and important web links.

Recommendation 13:

The Panel recommended that the initial and update training for part-time tutors be strengthened. [*Paragraph C.6.6*]

For the attention of: Head of Department

Response: From the Department

After intra-departmental meetings we have reached some clarity regarding what would be useful and desirable in this area and we have appointed a senior lecturer with direct responsibility for this area of DACE's activities. While staff are strongly supportive of continuing development for tutors, there are concerns about the level that would be sustainable, given the small number of hours most tutors work. In addition, many of our tutors are retired lecturers, and already have extensive teaching knowledge and experience.

There are two types of support available for tutors, some of whom teach across other parts of the University. The first is logistic support, such as technical support with Moodle, photocopying, access to teaching resources, and so on. This responsibility for support will remain with course co-ordinators within DACE.

The second level is related to their development as instructors. Currently, there is a voluntary tutor-training day at the start of the academic year. This will be replaced by two days, one at the start of the year and a further one as a review day at the end. The format of the days will be changed to be more 'bottom-up', focused more closely on emergent issues and peer support. Attendance will be strongly recommended for both new and continuing tutors.

Aside from this general provision of tutor development, there is more specialised training for specific types of tutors. The main exemplar for this model is the language programme. Currently, DACE runs courses for the public at a variety of levels in 16 languages, necessitating a serious and continuous tutor training programme conducted by the senior lecturer in this area.

Further, the Access programme, where there are many tutors (2007), there is another programme. A new training programme is to be conducted in September and a mentoring programme established for new tutors.

DACE also provides support to tutors in terms of payment of participation in the University of Strathclyde's Certificate in Professional Development in Adult Teaching and Learning. Occasionally, tutors have been supported in their involvement with the University's New Lecturer Programme. In addition, tutors are encouraged to attend relevant Computing Services and Human Resources professional development.

In summary, this area of tutor development will continue to be reviewed regularly. Some provision is of a more generic nature; others are more particular to the subject(s) taught and the character of the students.

Recommendation 14:

The Panel recommended that Course Leaders/Programme Co-ordinators be encouraged to review the mode of delivery and assessment in all courses with a view to a possible move to more blended learning and use of IT, while recognising constraints on some students with limited access to IT facilities. [Paragraph C.4.6]

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Course Leaders**

Response: From the Department

DACE acknowledges that the use of Information Technology has the potential to enhance access to some courses and improve their quality. It is being introduced both across the Faculty of Education and DACE as one of the focuses for the Teaching and Learning Committee. At present the use of IT is more sporadic than systematic but we need to be aware that not all courses are suited to the extensive use of IT. For instance, at the level of Access, too great an expectation of computer literacy can be off-putting to already fragile students.

The issue of appropriate assessment in courses is a University-wide phenomenon. DACE, especially through its own internal course committee structures and reports from external examiners, continues to review the extent and appropriateness of types of assessment for adult learners. Some external examiners have been very complimentary towards the pedagogical innovation (inclusive of assessment practices) demonstrated in DACE programmes such as the Open Programme and the Certificate in HE.

The move towards more blended learning is already happening within the Faculty of Education (e.g. in the EdD). While to the forefront in programmes such as the M.Litt. (Oman), blended learning could be advantageous in other aspects of DACE's provision, especially where face-to-face interaction is less viable. DACE will continue to monitor those programmes already in blended mode but also look to pilot other courses/programmes where such an approach will engender greater access for disenfranchised groups.

Recommendation 15:

The Panel recommended that Probationary Staff be afforded the stipulated adjustment to workload while they were completing the requirements of probationer training. [Paragraph C.6.8]

For the attention of: Head of Department

Response: From the Department

DACE recognises the need for new staff to have time to engage profitably in the New Lecturer/Teacher Programme conducted by the Teaching and Learning Service. It would be contrary to our social justice principles to do otherwise. While adjustments to workload have been made in consideration of this expectation of completion of probationer training, where a staff member has two part-time posts across more than one faculty or occupies a part-time post only or undertakes additional work of his/her own making above the agreed baseline, the outcome can be perceived as a heavier than

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normal workload. The Head of Department is conscious of this need for development opportunities for probationers and will continue to monitor this situation carefully.

Recommendation 16:

The Panel recommended that staff, including part-time tutors, be encouraged to meet periodically as a 'large group' for social interaction and discussion of issues of common interest. [*Paragraph C.6.6*]

For the attention of: Head of Department; Course Leaders

Response: From the Department

There is commitment to re-establishing a cycle of social events for tutors, perhaps to be incorporated into the training days mentioned under recommendation 13. In the past, social events have been organised in the Open Programme, the Cert HE, Access and the Language Programme. These will be managed by subject specialists where possible, since the large number of tutors would make one big meeting impractical. At the least, there will be organised meetings for tutors at the end of each semester. In addition, DACE will continue to publish a *Departmental Newsletter for Tutors* to provide a baseline of communication about their teaching issues.

Recommendation 17:

The Panel recommended that the DACE workload model be reviewed and that discussions be held with the Dean as to an appropriate model for the Department. [*Paragraph C.6.8*]

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Dean of the Faculty of Education**

Response: From the Department

Within DACE, academic staff have been consulted regarding their views on the suitability and fairness of the current workload formula. The workload model includes details of staff's engagements in teaching, research and administration. On 24 April 2007 there was a special meeting of academic staff where workload issues were discussed and the strengths and limitations of the existing model examined together with consideration of other Departments' workload models.

DACE is a department of special character with a different profile from others in the Faculty, given that it provides the biggest public education programme in Scotland. By other departments' standards it has a large administrative brief, especially as it carries out its own registration of students (a system to which we would want to adhere). Consequently, the range of academic work is diverse with some academics involved in more administration than others but it also includes relevant teaching and research functions. The responsibility of the Head of Department is to ensure fairness of workload incorporating these three domains. The current model fulfils this task well. The academic staff have endorsed the current model.

The current Head of Department meets annually with every academic staff member to review the previous year's work, discuss emergent issues and to formulate the next academic year's allocation of duties.

Recommendation 18:

The Panel recommended that there be a review of the allocation of staff offices across the Faculty with a view to rationalisation of identifiable Departmental groups. [Paragraph C.6.3]

For the attention of: Dean of the Faculty of Education

Response: From the Department

In discussion with the Head of Department for DACE, the Dean has identified the geographical location of staff as problematic, not just for DACE but for all departments in the Faculty of Education. While it is highly desirable that staff with common interests be located physically in office space as close as possible, the practical steps required to achieve this objective would be excessively onerous and disruptive compared with a slower more graduated move in that direction. Hence, the principle is acknowledged as important and where practicable it will be exercised with discretion.

Recommendation 19:

The Panel recommended that, in seeking feedback from students, the Department recognise the limitations of paper questionnaires and consider other means, e.g. focus groups which provide a useful means of obtaining student comments over a wider range than is often possible using more prescriptive questionnaires. [Paragraph E.2]

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Course Leaders**

Response: From the Department

The Department would concur that paper questionnaires have limitations, and also that there is no doubt a high level of student fatigue with them.

We understand that the Senate Office is currently looking at questionnaire types and other examples of student feedback, and the Department will seek further suggestions and options arising from this review.

With respect to the benefits of questionnaires, they are easy to replicate across a number of courses and across years, allowing for fair comparisons to be made. In addition, it is also relatively easy to summarise responses from them and this quickly highlights strengths and weaknesses. They also offer anonymity which is advantageous. This does make them a generally very useful basis for student and tutor feedback.

The current questionnaires for the Open Programme are rather long, old-fashioned and perhaps contain too much jargon and unfamiliar language. They are all being reviewed for the 2007/08 session. The Department is hopeful that a shorter questionnaire may encourage more thoughtful answers.

However, although dominated by the mode of the questionnaire, student feedback to the department is acquired by a variety of means. For instance, whole class discussions are held within the BA Community Development and BCLD programmes, the Counselling Skills Certificate and also as part of end-of-year review in the postgraduate programmes. All language students are sent a specially tailored questionnaire by post (for which we normally receive a 50% return) and, where appropriate, follow-up telephone conversations are also conducted.

The Department is intending to explore the further potential of focus groups, albeit aware of the difficulties in persuading busy, adult students to give up more of their

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time. In some instances, such as the tutorial groups within the Postgraduate Diploma/MSc in Adult and Continuing Education, small groups of students meet regularly with students and feedback is on-going. However, we will explore the use of focus groups in specific subject areas and where new courses/programmes have been established (e.g. Certificate in Drug and Alcohol Practice).

In addition, the DACE Guidance Officer will keep a record of the reasons for withdrawal of students from selected programmes, as feasible.

Recommendation 20:

The Panel recommended that DACE review its position with regard to registering courses as eligible for ILAs. [*Paragraph C.5.1*]

For the attention of: Head of Department

Response: From the Department

The Department recognises the importance of the use of Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) as part of its social equity philosophy. DACE registered all eligible courses with ILA Scotland in June 2006 and around 500 ILAs were used to pay for courses in the session 2006/2007. A more aggressive marketing approach will be taken in summer 2007 to increase awareness of the scheme among our existing and potential student base.

Recommendation 21:

The Panel recommended that consideration be given to the danger that the definition and remit of University Teacher/Senior University Teacher would be undermined if appointees to such positions were research active. [*Paragraph C.6.7*]

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Dean of the Faculty of Education**

Response: From the Department

The Department recognises the distinction between University Teacher and University Lecturer in terms of job specifications. The previous and current Head of Department have interpreted the requirement to undertake scholarship flexibly so that the possibility of transition from UT to UL remains. In fact, since the review, one member of staff has moved from a 0.5 UT position to a 0.5 UL by dint of completion of her PhD. It is not an expectation that UT staff engage in research; on the other hand, if UT staff do engage in research in preparation for teaching, this should not be discouraged in a University context. This interpretation of the situation has been endorsed by the Dean of the Faculty of Education.

Recommendation 22:

The Panel recommended that a system be put in place to record the number of students seen by the Guidance Officer and the number of students referred on by her to the Effective Learning Adviser. [*Paragraph C.5.2*]

**For the attention of: Head of Department
Guidance Officer**

Response: From the Department

In accord with the Panel's recommendation, the Department needs to decide the merits of setting up such a system. At present we can provide the following kind of data using a less formal procedure:

From August 2006 to March 2007 one to one booked interviews	139
Guidance interactions over the year via email	approx 400+
Guidance interactions over the year via telephone	approx 400+
Tutor referrals/follow ups January-March 2007	70 +
UCAS 2007 guidance interactions	80
Referrals to Student Disability Service	numbers registered 22 (others referred but no SDS form issued)
Referrals to Effective Learning Adviser	all access students and Cert HE are advised of this service; individual students are advised to self refer and about 10 named referrals were made.

We question the need to quantify every aspect of the Guidance Officer's role and the ultimate purpose of such an exercise. The collection of some data would be problematic. For instance, if we collect exact data on guidance interactions with students, to what extent do we differentiate between existing and prospective students (given intermittent patterns of adult participation, this is difficult if not impossible to distinguish one from the other)? Do we include face-to-face or telephone or e-mail, sometimes of the same student? Do we include or exclude tutor referrals? In short, the sheer diversity of adult students, their varied motivations and aspirations, and their modes of communication make this whole arena virtually impossible to categorise and quantify.

Certainly, the numbers of students referred to the Effective Learning Adviser can be tabulated without much bother and this part of the recommendation will be implemented.

Recommendation 23:

The Panel recommended that there should be further discussion with the University about the opening of the canteen facility until mid-evening on days when evening classes were being held and that profitability should not be regarded as the overriding concern. [*Paragraph C.6.5*]

**For the attention of: Dean
Director of Hospitality Services**

Response: From the Department

The issue of providing decent hospitality facilities, particularly food in the evenings for students coming straight from work, remains problematic. Discussions have been held with Hospitality Services whose unchangeable position is that it cannot run at a loss. It seems that unless the Department or the Faculty can provide a guarantee against loss in such circumstances, the café in the St Andrew's Building will remain closed.

Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Responses to the
Recommendations Arising from the Review of the Department of Adult and Continuing Education held
on 30 April and 1 May 2006

The Department has raised awareness of, and has updated the existing vending machines located on floor 4 of the North Wing (The Gallery café) to complement other machines on the ground floor. Unfortunately, the range of products is very limited.

The upshot of this impasse is that the facilities for “out-of-hours” students is of a lower quality and less user-friendly than those for mainstream undergraduates.

Prepared by: Janet Fleming, Senate Office

Last modified on: Tuesday 23 October 2007