

The University of Edinburgh

The Moray House School of Education

School Postgraduate Studies Committee

22 August 2016

**Programme Review of MSc Education/Proposal for new pathways in the MSc
Education**

Brief description of the paper

A programme review of MSc Education took place in April 2016. Attached is the report of the review meeting together with paperwork to support the proposal that a number of new named pathways be developed within MSc Education. There are a number of documents within this paper, namely:

- Paper B (i): Report from review of MSc Education, incorporating the programme team's response to the report's conditions and recommendations
- Paper B (ii) Programme Review document including proposed new structure
- Paper B (iii) Appendix - Assessment Matrix 2016-17
- Paper B (iv) Appendix 5 - Revised Degree Programme Tables
- Paper B (v) Appendix 10 - Leadership Structure Diagram (Updated)
- Paper B (vi) Appendix 11 – Education Pathway Diagram (Updated July 2016)

It should be noted that there is still some work to be done in tidying up the paperwork before its submission to College. Some of the appendices in the main report are currently presented as separate attachments but will be incorporated in the main paperwork for the final version. There are also some minor changes to the content of the paperwork (for example cutting out one course from DPTs, removing one course descriptor and adding another, making sure all page numbers and appendices in revised paperwork are correct)

Action requested

For information, comment and formal approval. Members of SPGSC are not expected to review all these papers in detail as the papers have been reviewed by members of the review panel. Once SPGSC has approved the documentation supporting the development of the new pathways, this will be forwarded to College Postgraduate Studies Committee for approval.

Resource implications

Does the paper have resource implications? Yes

Resource issues are dealt with in section 5 of Paper B (ii) Programme review document

Risk assessment

No

Equality and diversity

Have due considerations been given to the equality impact of this paper? Yes

Freedom of information

Can this paper be included in open business? Yes

Any other relevant information

None

Originator of the paper

Dr J MacAllister, Programme Director, MSc Education



The Moray House School of Education
The University of Edinburgh

Programme Review of MSc Education

The Panel met from 12 noon to 5.00pm on 26 April 2016 in room 4.21 St John's Land

Panel Members

Dr John I'anson, School of Education, University of Stirling
Gary Roberts, School of Education and Social Work, University of Dundee
Dr Lorraine Cale, School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University
Dr Laura Bradley, School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, The University of Edinburgh
Rachel O'Neill, The Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh
Dr John Telford, The Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh
Dr Hazel Christie, Institute for Academic Development, The University of Edinburgh
Dr Gavin Reid, The Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh
Dr Pete Allison, The Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh,
Convener

Programme Teaching Team

Dr K Cebula, MSc Education
Dr J Crowther, MSc Community Education
Dr R Ewins, Course Director (Research Methods courses)
Dr D Fry, Programme Director (MSc Education)
Dr I Fyfe, MSc Education
Dr V Galloway, MSc Community Education
Dr M Jess, Programme Director (PgCert 3-14 Physical Education)
Dr J Li, Programme Director (MSc Education)
Dr J MacAllister, Programme Director (revised MSc Education)
Ms M Ross, Programme Secretary (MSc Education/Educational Research)
Dr C Valentin, MSc Education

In attendance

Lesley Rowand, the Moray House School of Education

The Convenor started the meeting by welcoming all participants and by thanking them for their help. Documentation in support of the proposal had been circulated to the Panel prior to the meeting. The panel started by agreeing that the supporting material prepared by Dr MacAllister was extensive and highlighted important and exciting developments for MSc

Education and MSc Educational Research and for the other programmes which would form pathways within the revised programme. If successful, this was also a model that might be adapted for other programmes within the School of Education. Following discussion the Panel agreed on the key issues to raise with the programme team. Representatives of the programme team then joined the group for the second part of the meeting. The subsequent discussions included aspects such as the programme’s different pathways, diversification of the cohort, marketing of the new programme and its pathways, viability of courses and programmes, assessment methods, structure, curriculum content, and staff resources.

Following the above discussions, the Panel had a further private meeting to agree on the following conditions and recommendations, which were then presented to the programme team:

Commendations

The programme team would like to thank the Panel for their constructive comments and questions on the day of the review. We are also grateful for their commendations, conditions and recommendations. These have proved to be very helpful and we have given them a lot of thought. We include our considered responses to each of the conditions and recommendations below in blue, point by point. We also enclose a series of attachments detailing the specifics of how various parts of the programme review documentation has been altered in light of our responses to the conditions and recommendations of the Panel. The programme team would also like thank our Course Secretary, Mairi Ross, for her dedicated support as well as the Convener of the Panel, Pete Allison, who has continued to go out of his way to support the revision and development of this programme.

Commendation 1
The MSc Education team was commended for its approach to this review. The documentation and discussion at the review meetings were constructive and enjoyable. The review panel considered that the proposed design of the programme was progressive, allowing more flexibility and responsiveness, and would be a model which could be developed more widely across the School.
Commendation 2
The inclusion of a SLICC (Student-Led Individually Created Course) within the Degree Programme Table. This is consistent with developments elsewhere within the University.
Commendation 3
The variety and range of different pathways and courses.
Commendation 4
The links with research informed teaching in each of the pathways.
Commendation 5
The proactive approach to the challenge of diversifying the student intake.
Commendation 6

The programme team's work in coping with the programme's recent exponential growth and managing this through dynamic and imaginative strategies.

Commendation 7

The innovative approach to teaching and learning. The review team hoped that the programme's new structure would make it easier to share these innovations more widely across the School.

Commendation 8

The new pathways structure should help students, particularly those on smaller programmes, feel an increased sense of belonging and enhance the PG community within the School.

Commendation 9

The attention to detail throughout the programme to ensure the student experience is optimised. For instance: the start date of Education Policy and the Politics of Education, the careful allocation of dissertation supervisors.

Conditions

Condition 1

The assessment matrix included within the review documentation should be updated to represent more accurately the range of assessment methods in place across courses and how these relate to the graduate attributes laid out in the programme specification. At present the impression given is that course assignments are usually 4000 word essays. **Course descriptors are updated to represent accurately the range of assessment methods in place. A revised assessment matrix is presented in the appendices. There is now less reliance upon single essays as the medium for assessment than before and a greater diversity of graded assessment tasks across the programme including: group presentations, blogs, portfolios of work, secondary analysis of data, essays, written summaries of presentation tasks and tasks related to reflection on professional practice, independent research projects. The increased variety of assessment tasks will help students to develop the graduate attributes that the programme intends them to develop.**

Condition 2

Include more on formative feedback within the documentation, in line with the University policy on giving formative feedback prior to the final summative assessment deadline. **The programme team are very committed to delivering high quality feedforward guidance and all courses in the programme will have feedforward tasks and guidance built in to them. The course descriptors have been updated with more information about the provision of formative feedback. The revised course descriptors are included in the appendices.**

Condition 3

Review all course assessments and consider the use of more than one form of assessment to contribute to the final mark. At the moment, there appears to be a predominance of

courses with a single assessment contributing 100% of the final mark. **All Course organisers have reviewed the assessment methods and were asked to consider the use of more than one form of graded assessment. The revised assessment matrix is presented in the appendices. Here it is worth noting that a significant number of course leaders have changed their assessment arrangements with this condition in mind. As such a much greater proportion of the courses we intend to offer from 2017/2018 onwards will have more than one mode of graded assessment than in the paperwork we submitted to the panel originally.**

Condition 4

Review and update all course descriptors. In particular, attention should be given to ensuring that the level of detail in course descriptors is consistent and that content is international. **Course organisers have reviewed their course content and revised course descriptors in line with the international market and latest school guidance about what should be in a course descriptor. These revised course descriptors are presented in the appendices.**

Condition 5

Given the large number of courses currently available, consider whether some courses should be closed and whether some should be offered only every second year. The impetus for doing this would be to maintain the viability of courses. Making approximately 20 course options available to the cohort in a year should result in viable student numbers for each course. If 30 options were available, it is likely student numbers would be spread too thinly for a number of courses to run. Timetabling implications would also have to be considered. Alternatives such as flip classroom and evening teaching may have to be introduced but this would have to be clearly advertised to students on the webpages. Consideration of staff needs and availability would also be a factor. **The programme team agrees that there should be a real impetus to keep courses viable. As such they are committed to running approximately 20 option courses each year. Some courses will be taken off the Degree Programme Table altogether (For example, Working with Communities: SLICC and Foundations of International Child Protection) while others will only run on consecutive years (For example, Human resource Development: Theory and Practice; Designing, delivering and evaluating Training; and also courses linked to both the Physical Education and Wellbeing and Learning in Communities Pathways). Updated Degree Programme Tables are included in the appendices.**

Condition 6

Agree a plan for the leadership and governance of the programme. The panel had discussed whether or not there was a need for pathway coordinators for each pathway but concluded that this was a matter that should be decided upon by the programme team. However, the panel encouraged maintenance of the strong team approach that had been in evidence during the review. It also cautioned against over-reliance on a single programme director as this would likely lead to an unacceptably high workload and an unhealthy reliance on one individual. **The Programme Team have worked with the Head of Institute and have developed a diagram (now included as a new appendix) of the proposed structure of the leadership of the programme. This involves having a Programme Director, a Director of Dissertations, 7 Pathway Co-ordinators and a Course Secretary. Each of the**

roles will be elucidated through a formal job description during the course of 2016/2017 and agreed with the incoming Director of PGT and Head of Institute prior to commencing the new programme model.

Condition 7

With immediate effect, current PhD students should not be used as supervisors for MSc dissertation students. PhD students are not supervising MSc dissertation students on this programme. This may have been a situation in the past but not with the current programme team. It will not happen in the future either.

Condition 8

Prepare a dissertation course descriptor. The programme team were also encouraged to consider diverse approaches to the dissertation – e.g. research proposals, capstone projects. Consideration should also be given to whether there is justification for the dissertation's credit value varying from 50 to 60 credits depending on the pathway followed. A dissertation course descriptor is now included among the appendices. This highlights a number of models for undertaking the dissertation including capstone/ practice based projects, research proposals, empirical projects, desk based projects as well as dissertations by publication. We will discuss as a team whether particular pathways will be better if they have a 60 credit dissertation. However at the moment the assumption is that all students will compose a 50 credit piece of work.

Condition 9

All pathways to include at least 20 credits (ideally 40) of optional course(s) from anywhere in the School or wider University. As it stands all pathways do include at least 20 credits of optional courses from anywhere in the School or wider University. The only group of students that did not have this choice in the initial proposals were endorsed route students in the Learning in Communities pathway (non-endorsed route students do have that choice). However, subject to the Standards Council for Community Learning and Development agreeing that taking an option course will not prevent endorsed route students from meeting the professional standards, then all Learning in Communities students will have the choice to take at least one option course too. The Pathway Co-ordinator for Learning in Communities is currently liaising with the Standards Council to determine the precise professional requirements of students on the endorsed route.

Condition 10

The pathway for Learning in Communities should have the 40% of practice clearly highlighted. This would be required in order to satisfy the professional approval requirements of the Standards Council for Community Learning and Development for Scotland. The Pathway Co-ordinator for Learning in Communities is currently liaising with the Standards Council for Community Learning and Development and will ensure that the 40% practice requirement is made explicit in programme handbooks and course materials.

Condition 10

The programme/pathway team to consult with the Standards Council for Community Learning and Development for Scotland regarding whether or not the pathway will require a full review in order to maintain approval. The Pathway Co-ordinator for Learning in Communities is currently liaising with the Standards Council for Community Learning and

Development for Scotland to verify whether an additional full review is required to maintain approval.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Panel recommended that the programme team undertake a competitor analysis to review other institutions in terms of what is provided for students, modes of delivery and the fees charged. The programme team should work with the School's Marketing Officer to undertake this analysis. [The Programme Team have liaised with the School's Marketing Officer and will engage in a competitor analysis during the summer and autumn 2016 and prior to the new programme commencing. This competitor analysis will include exploration of what competitors provide for students, their modes of delivery and fees charged.](#)

Recommendation 2

The programme team should look at the strength of the rationale for the overall programme and each of its pathways. USPs should be highlighted so that the University of Edinburgh's programme stands out from others. For example, more emphasis could be placed on the Philosophy pathway as this is unusual and also continues an Edinburgh tradition of the study of the philosophy of education. The descriptions of the programme and pathways should be clear and bold and greater prominence be given to possible career opportunities. [The description for the philosophy of education pathway has been revised to highlight more clearly the long tradition of education students studying philosophy at Edinburgh and how the pathway builds on this tradition. The descriptions and marketing materials for all the pathways will be discussed by the programme team at an away day in August with a view to making clearer what the USP's for each pathway are as well as possible career opportunities for each pathway.](#)

Recommendation 3

The programme team should plan to keep reviewing the revised programme on an ongoing basis. It would be important to know quickly which aspects were/were not working. Criteria for success should be agreed in advance especially in regards to the viability of a pathway or a course. [The Programme Team will have three away days during the course of 2016/2017 where they will devise a monitoring and evaluation plan with clear criteria for success prior to commencing the new programme. The programme will then be evaluated against these criteria in both 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.](#)

Recommendation 4

The Panel encouraged the programme team to continue to explore the name of the pathways, in particular relating to physical education. Broadening its title to include health and well-being might encourage diversification of the student intake. [The Programme Team have reviewed all the pathway names and changed the PE pathways name from 'Physical Education' to 'Physical Education and Well-being'. The title of the 'Philosophy' pathway will also be changed to the 'Philosophy of education' as philosophy of education is a long established discipline of education research that was recognised by the REF 2014 as producing high quality research.](#)

Recommendation 5

The programme team should work with the School Marketing Officer and the International Office to create a marketing plan/strategy. This would also help to raise awareness of the changes to the programme within those two departments. The Programme Team have already commenced work with the School Marketing Officer and the International Office to create a marketing plan and strategy, this work is ongoing and will be in place prior to commencing the new programme. The competitor analysis being carried out will also shape how the team develop the marketing of the new programme.

Recommendation 6

Map out possible routes through the pathways for part-time students. Thought should also be given to how to encourage more part-time students and whether more scholarships could be made available to these students. The Programme Team will have three away days during the course of 2016/2017 and in preparation for the second away day, each Pathway Co-ordinator will draft the journey of the part-time students through their pathway. These student routes will then be discussed as a programme team at the final away day and made coherent across the programme prior to commencing the new structure in 2017/2018. The idea to offer scholarships to PT students will also be discussed at one of the away days as we think it is worth pursuing.

Recommendation 7

Develop pathway diagrams so that students have a visual representation of each pathway. Pathway diagrams have been created for each pathway and are now included in the appendices.

Recommendation 8

The programme's webpages should be enhanced and enlivened – for instance video snapshots could be added with a move away from text dependency. Advice on this should be taken from the Marketing department and others within the School with web design expertise. The Programme Team will have three away days during the course of 2016/2017 and will utilise this time to plan for the enhancement of the programmes web pages and planning and recording videos to upload for students prior to commencing the new programme. Advice has also be taken from the marketing department who will support the process of updating the webpages.

Recommendation 9

The programme team should investigate whether successful completion of any of the MSc Education pathways might lead to qualified teacher status in some countries. If so, this should be promoted within the programme's advertising materials and made prominent on the website. The Programme Team are currently gathering relevant information. Initial findings show that in China (other countries yet to be researched), graduates may pursue a teaching qualification through taking a series of tests. It is not yet clear whether private/international primary and secondary schools requires teaching certificates. Some graduates went on to teach in private language teaching institutes, where usually no teaching qualification is required.

An important point would seem to be that a Masters degree in education contributes very positively to the overall profile of graduates who would like to pursue a teaching career. The Programme Team will document all the findings from these inquiries and make this information available to prospective students as well as the International Office. The Programme Director has also spoken with marketing with the intention of better marketing how the MSc Education will enhance the profile of students wishing to pursue a career in education and/or teaching.

Recommendation 10

Consideration should be given to making some courses available as CPD for part-time students and possibly gaining GTCS recognition for these courses. This could be discussed with Aileen Kennedy, programme director for the proposed Scottish Masters and Rosa Murray (drawing on previous experiences with the GTCS). [Discussions have been had with Aileen Kennedy and are ongoing with regards to making some courses available as CPD for part-time students and also with regards to gaining GTCS recognition for these courses.](#)

Recommendation 11

The programme team and the Graduate School Director should work with the Head of School to ensure that the staffing of the research methods courses is appropriate. These programmes are a crucial part of the Graduate School's teaching provision and should be properly valued. It would be good to see some of the School's leading researchers taking part in the delivery of these courses. [Initial meetings have been held and the Programme Team will continue to liaise with the new Director of PGT and the 3 Heads of Institutes to take forward this recommendation during the next academic year and the ones to follow.](#)

Collaborate with other programme directors in the School who have courses on their programmes which might be of interest as options to MSc Education students (e.g. MSc Inclusive Education and MSc Outdoor Education). [Courses in MSc Inclusive Education, MSc Education: Language and MSc Childhood Studies are currently included in the MSc Ed timetable in year 2015/16 and will be made available on an ongoing basis.](#)

Recommendation 13

The Panel recommended that the programme team explore the possibility of merging the research methods courses currently part of MSc Education (Research) with the other research methods courses taken by other pathways (e.g. planning research). Similarly, consideration should be given to merging the two professional learning courses. [As of 2017/2018 designing educational research will become a 10 credit course and will be made available to all MSc Education students. This is very positive as it means that MSc Education students will have the option of producing a written or poster proposal for their dissertation. A revised course descriptor for designing educational research is included in the appendices. The programme team is also committed to evaluating the continued fitness for purpose of the research methods courses for all students. There will be a formal criteria of success for this in the programme evaluation process we develop.](#)

Before ending the meeting, the Convenor thanked all the participants for their hard work, and the programme leader also thanked the Panel for the valuable discussions and recommendations.