

## STATEMENT ON AGREED COMMON STRUCTURE FOR PGT PROGRAMMES

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The University has not had a common approach to the design of PGT programmes. As a result there is a wide variation across the Faculties, for example in terms of the size of units, which has arisen for historic reasons. This in turn makes inter-departmental collaboration on PGT programmes difficult and does not allow for novel programmes in inter-disciplinary areas to be easily constructed.
- 1.2 Recently the PGT profiles of each academic department, in relation to its market share, have been considered and the results have been incorporated into the Academic Planning Round. In many cases opportunities for the development of new programmes in collaboration with other departments were identified.
- 1.3 It is therefore highly desirable for the University to consider a model for **new** PGT programmes that will facilitate intra-University collaborations based on a common structure.

### 2. Agreed common approach to new PGT programmes

- 2.1 It has been agreed by Senate that, to facilitate collaboration between departments in developing PGT provision, there should be a University-wide common structure for new PGT programmes based on units of 15/30 credits<sup>1</sup>, with a 60 credit dissertation or research project.
- 2.2 All existing programmes will have moved across to the common structure by the start of session 2010-11 (i.e. in 4 years).
- 2.3 Departments may use a unit size of their own choice for core units that would not be taken outside the department and then use the agreed credit size (15/30) for optional modules.
- 2.6 The aim of these proposals is to encourage interdisciplinarity and the creation of programme structures that allow departments to collaborate effectively. In some cases the use of the "learning object" (a small educationally coherent 'chunk') may be a useful concept to employ. Learning objects may consist of 'chunks' which form the core component of several modules studied by students from different areas who then go on to do the 'specialist' part of the module. A learning object might be taken from an existing larger module, or be created as it is generic and then embedded in larger modules. Examples might include learning objects on areas of management, law, or research ethics in industry. It is not suggested that learning objects would be accredited separately and students would not be awarded partial credits for a sub-component of a module.

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<sup>1</sup> This reflects the preponderance of programme structures across the University. It is recognised that some programmes will continue to be brought forward in a different format e.g. due to professional accreditation requirements, or where units will not be available outside the Department.

- 2.7 A common structure for PGT programmes across the University will create a framework where departments can identify existing modules and put them together to easily create new programmes.

### **3. Conclusions**

- 3.1 All **new** PGT programmes should be based on 15 or 30 credit units, with a 60 credit dissertation or research project. The size of core units that will not be available to students outside the department can be determined by the department.
- 3.3 Departments are encouraged to think in terms of “learning objects” when designing programmes. The mode of delivery (e.g. use of on-line materials or block teaching) should also be considered, where appropriate to provide opportunities for the unit to be made available for CPD (continuing professional development) or as part of a distance learning programme.
- 3.4 Departments should consider, in collaboration with one another, what they can offer more widely, and what they would wish to see offered to them through the learning object approach.
- 3.5 It is recognised that some programmes will continue to be brought forward in a different format e.g. due to professional requirements, or where the units will only be available within the department.

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