

## **Plymouth University**

### **Regulatory Framework for Professional Development/ Short Courses**

#### **1 Introduction**

The types of professional development/short course delivered across the University are:

- Credit rated short courses - either generated and approved for a specific purpose or pre-approved modules delivered as a short course
- Non-credit rated short courses - usually generated by employer need and delivered intensively in a short time frame.

The regulations which follow provide a framework within which short courses should be delivered.

#### **2 Credit Rated Short Courses**

##### **2.1 Approval**

- 2.1.1 The University has established procedures for the approval of professional development/short course, which are available on the Quality Handbook community or from the Central Quality Office.
- 2.1.2 Some existing programmes may provide a suitable framework within which modules could be run as short courses. Alternatively there could be a faculty structure, modelled on the Faculty of Education International Masters Programme, in which there was an overarching, umbrella award with named routes depending on the modules completed. Students would be able to accumulate credits and claim awards, e.g. PgCert, PGDip as they exited from the programme, provided this was within the registration period specified in the academic regulations.
- 2.1.3 The minimum course credit value would normally be 10 credits. However, the Continuing Professional Development Sub-Committee may exceptionally approve 5 credit modules, subject to the production of a satisfactory rationale. The maximum credit value is 60 credits at levels 4, 5, 6 or 7. Those completing a short course of 60 credits at level 7 will only be eligible for credit and a transcript. If a named postgraduate certificate was to be awarded a full approval event for the introduction of the award would be required.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.1.4 It may be useful to distinguish between the general credits awarded for successful completion of a short course, and specific credits which the short course might attract as a part of the requirements for a University award.

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<sup>1</sup> Any requests for exceptions to University Regulations, including non-standard module sizes, will be subject to the approval of the Continuing Professional Development Sub-Committee.

## **2.2 Admission/Enrolment**

- 2.2.1 Admission to credit rated short courses is at the discretion of the course leader, who would apply the normal admission criteria.
- 2.2.2 All Faculties should use the standard proposal form and enrolment form for credit rated short courses.
- 2.2.3 Timely access to facilities, following enrolment on the Student Record System is required, particularly for students attending an intensively-delivered short course. Module leaders should notify the Student Records Office at least one week in advance of students requiring access to facilities in order that enrolment on the Student Record System could be achieved as early as possible.
- 2.2.4 It would be acceptable for an undergraduate student to be permitted to undertake 20 Level 7 credits as a short course alongside their registered programme of study, subject to the agreement of the programme leader for the student's registered award. However, the credits from the short courses would not normally be counted against their official award target.

## **2.3 Assessment and Certification**

- 2.3.1 All credit rated short courses must be formally assessed so that students may be judged to have satisfied the learning outcomes and thereby satisfactorily completed the course.
- 2.3.2 The assessments for all credit rated short courses must be externally examined, the marks must be approved by an appropriate Subject Assessment Panel and the award of credit confirmed by an appropriate Award Assessment Board.
- 2.3.3 Faculties should where feasible seek agreement from an existing Subject External Examiners to moderate a module delivered as a credit rated short course, with the approval of the Dean of Faculty. There would be no further need for this arrangement to be formally approved by the External Examiner's Sub-committee, but the Central Quality Office must be notified of any such additional responsibility being undertaken by an existing External Examiner. It may be appropriate for an additional fee to be paid to the Subject External Examiner to cover the extra work; the level of fee would be at the discretion of the Faculty. Should there be no current Subject External Examiner who could take on these duties a new nomination would need to be approved through the usual formal university process.
- 2.3.4 A student who was unable to complete the formal assessment due to extenuating circumstances should, as with other registered students, be required to complete and submit an extenuating circumstances form for consideration by the faculty Screening Committee.
- 2.3.5 A student who failed a credit rated short course should be entitled to a referral/repeat in the assessment/short course in line with the relevant regulations for postgraduate or undergraduate awards, where the maximum amount of overall credit referral may be restricted. Any student failing a credit rated short course should, if they have grounds, be entitled to submit an appeal.

2.3.6 Certificates of Attendance/ Completion of a Short Course would be generated for students completing a credit rated short course to provide a record of achievement and for future use in Accreditation of Certificated Prior Learning. The provision of Certificates should be in line with the “Certification of Awards and Supplementary Certification” regulations, contained in the Academic Regulations.

## **2.4 Annual Monitoring**

2.4.1 Credit rated short courses which are also modules within programmes will be included in the normal annual monitoring procedures. Those which are not automatically part of this process should nevertheless be reviewed in a similar way to ensure quality is maintained.

2.4.2 Students on credit rated short courses are not required to complete the Student Perception Questionnaire.

## **3. Non-Credit Rated Short Courses**

### **3.1 Approval**

3.1.1 Faculties must put in place a mechanism by which non-credit rated short courses could be developed, approved and delivered within a short timescale in order to meet market demand.

3.1.2 Faculties must ensure that issues of quality assurance are appropriately addressed when approving non-credit rated short courses, being mindful of the need to ensure the speedy approval of the development.

### **3.2 Admission**

3.2.1 Admission to non-credit rated short courses is at the discretion of the course leader

3.2.2 Faculties would be required to report student numbers only on non-credited rated short courses to enable the central return to be made.

### **3.3 Assessment and Certification**

3.3.1 Non-credit rated courses would not normally be assessed and are therefore not normally required to be externally examined.

3.3.2 Certificates of Attendance would be generated for students completing a non-credit rated short course. The provision of Certificates should be in line with the “Certification of Awards and Supplementary Certification” regulations contained in the Academic regulations.

### **3.4 Annual Monitoring**

3.4.1 Non-credit rated short courses are not required to be included in the Annual Programme Monitoring procedure.

3.4.2 Students on non-credit rated short courses are not required to complete the Student Perception Questionnaire.

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