



Joint PgC/PgD/MSc by Distance Learning GIS Network

Minutes of Programme Committee Meeting held 20th May 2005 at Manchester Metropolitan University

Present: Ms A Boxer
Prof J E Hooker
Dr I B Drew
Dr D B Lambrick
Dr S A Power
Mr D E Reeve
Mr G R Smith (Chair)

In Attendance: Miss L Hazel (Clerical Assistant)
Miss T A McKenna (GIS Network Administrator)

100. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dr R P Armitage, Dr M P Cresswell, Prof F M Danson, and Dr A F Watson.

101. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

102. MATTERS ARISING

102.1 Arising from minute 95 it was confirmed that the Mr G Brown, External Examiner for the PgC/PgD/MSc GIS Network, had submitted his report for 2003/2004 and that it had been formally received by the Programme Committee.

101.2 Arising from minute 96 it was reported that the 2004-2005 Quality Action Plan had been approved and processed by the Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering (MMU).

102. STUDENT FEEDBACK

- 102.1 The *Programme Evaluation Questionnaire* (distributed annually) had been circulated to all registered students inviting comments on the Programme to date. A summary of the findings was circulated to the Programme Committee for discussion. The comments received demonstrated that the majority of students were satisfied with the organisation of the programme but noted that there remained a percentage of students who were concerned by the length of time taken to receive feedback from unit tutors.
- 102.2 The responses received (Intake 13) indicated that students had found the Geodata Sources unit (69EG4203) to have the greatest workload. The Course Team recognized the issue and the unit has been re-written for Intake 14. Further edits will be carried out for Intake 15.
- 102.3 The Programme Leader at the University of Huddersfield confirmed that the online version of the *Unit Evaluation Questionnaire* had been updated allowing students more scope to comment on the individual unit(s).
- 102.4 The responses established that students were using the off site library facilities including ATHENS and the UK Libraries Plus scheme. Library representatives from both the Salford and Manchester Metropolitan Universities have agreed to attend the Induction Workshop in September and speak to students about library facilities for Distance Learning students.
- 102.5 The Chair confirmed that any key issues raised by students would be included and addressed in the Quality Action Plan.
- 102.6 A feedback summary of the Workshops held this academic year was circulated to the Programme Committee. The responses revealed that these events were extremely well received and students enjoyed the opportunity for direct contact with tutors and their fellow students. Students continue to find the workshops a useful and important element of the Programme.
- 102.7 The Chair confirmed that further information will be provided to students when they register on the programme with regards to the assessment process together with more information regarding the general nature of distance learning to help students combat the feelings of isolation etc.
- 102.8 Progression rates for students who registered in 2003 (Intake 13) were circulated to the Committee. The reports demonstrated that 50% of students enrolled on the GIS pathway had completed the four core units of the programme. However students on the Environment pathway do not appear to have progressed as well as the other routes. The Chair confirmed that student progress is monitored carefully and regularly and that investigations will continue to try and establish any possible reasons for such variation.

ACTION: Mr G R Smith

- 102.9 Progression rates for students who registered in 2004 (Intake 14) were circulated to the Committee. It was found that approximately 40 – 50% of the entire intake had completed the first unit (69EG4200). Feedback had shown that students also found that learning new GIS software (used primarily in unit 2) a time-consuming process.

103. RECRUITMENT

It was reported that 26 applications had been received (at time of meeting 20th May 2005) from prospective students wishing to register on the Programme in September 2005. The Chair agreed that this number of applications was in line with figures for 2004.

104. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 104.1 A copy of the Quality Action Plan 2004/2005, approved by the Dean on 15th February 2005, was circulated to the Committee for discussion together with a copy of the proposed structure of the new programme:

Summary of Action 1: Preparation for and implementation of Quinquennial Review.

It was confirmed that discussions regarding the Quinquennial Review are well underway. The Programme Director confirmed that the *PAF/2* document required as part of the Quinquennial Review proceedings would need to be submitted to the FASC for approval in September/October 2005. This University of Salford would also require this documentation in a similar timeframe.

Summary of Action 2: Consideration of research design instruction for MSc projects.

This is an ongoing process. Documentation for the MSc students is to be revamped for September 2005 and there are proposals for a 10 credit research methods unit in the new programme.

Summary of Action 3: matrix showing the practical/academic elements – consideration for review.

The Programme Director has already begun this process and will report back at the earliest convenience.

Summary of Action 4: Consider/redesign programme questionnaire and methods for obtaining unit based feedback from students.

The online questionnaire has been updated and is now available for students. Unit questionnaires will be summarized for the forthcoming Moderation event.

Summary of Action 5: Adoption of a standard feedback/ marking proforma and consideration of return of feedback.

This has been carried out and each tutor now uses a standard form.

105. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 13th October at 1pm (Room tbc)