

# **SCHOOL OF HEALTHCARE STUDIES RESPONSE TO THE QUALITY PROGRESS REVIEW REPORT APPROVED BY THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY COMMITTEE**

## **Introduction**

The School is grateful to the Review Panel for their insightful comments on the School's procedures and activities and also particularly grateful to Karen Moore in Registry for her reading of the documentation and preparation of the Areas for Review Document prior to the formal visit. The School accepts all the recommendations of the Panel and the implicit recommendations in the Areas for Review Document and believes that it has dealt with virtually all of these with the remainder being areas for ongoing work into the future.

## **The Quality Progress Review Report (Recommendations to the School are shown in bold)**

### **ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND COMMITTEES (Pages 2 to 4)**

- 1. SOHCS makes responsibility for research students explicit in the terms of reference for the Research Committee**

The Terms of Reference of the School's Research Committee have been amended to make explicit their responsibility for research students and its duty to report on any issues arising to the School Board.

- 2. SOHCS considers developing a formal mechanism for periodically reviewing the membership and composition of School committees, for example in relation to gender/ethnicity/fixed term staff representation**

The Terms of Reference of the Equality and Diversity Committee have been amended to make it a formal task for them to review the membership and composition of all School Committees annually and report thereon to the School Board with any recommendations which stem from its review.

- 3. SOHCS considers producing formal guidance to staff and students on committee membership (eg role of committee member, opportunities for participation)**

The School now includes some guidance on committee membership and opportunities for participation in the Academic Handbook which is circulated to all staff and students, and is considering ways of providing more detailed guidance, particularly for students.

## **POLICIES AND STRATEGIES (Pages 4 to 5)**

- 4. SOHCS continues with its effort to improve the ways in which management information data is considered as part of the process of producing School policy documents.**

The School is further streamlining the ways in which management information data can be routinely considered by Committees and used in the process of developing School policy and producing School policy documents.

## **LEARNING AND TEACHING (Pages 7 to 9)**

- 5. SOHCS pays particular attention to the balance of staff effort between teaching and research in its workload model. This recommendation is made in recognition of the students' expressed concern about the pressure on Tutors in their teaching and pastoral care roles**

The balance of staff effort between teaching and research has been further considered by the Senior Management Team and it is believed that the application of the workload model that has been implemented throughout the School and the associated appraisal system will keep all aspects of this under review.

- 6. SOHCS makes more explicit in the Programme Handbook the contribution which research makes to the curriculum**

The contribution of research to the curriculum is covered at considerable length in the Academic Handbook and Programme Handbooks have been amended to cross reference this.

- 7. SOHCS considers looking at wider options and including other professions in IPL, once it is strengthened and embedded in the School**

The School is further developing its inter-professional learning programme and, as part of this, is looking into ways of including professions not represented within the School within this overall process. Some progress has already been made including social work in the inter-professional learning for Occupational Therapy students.

## **LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (Pages 10 to 11)**

- 8. SOHCS considers the issues raised by students relating to Blackboard, including the lack of clarity regarding which year of study the posted information is aimed at, and the location of the literature search engine**

The School has fully reviewed the information relating to particular modules on Blackboard and believes that it should now be clear to students to which module and year of study the information relates.

9. **SOHCS considers the issues raised by students relating to the availability of radiotherapy Oncology and Diagnostic Imaging books in the library.**

The issues relating to the availability of Radiotherapy and Oncology and Diagnostic Imaging books in the library has been reviewed and the collection has been suitably supplemented

#### **ASSESSMENT (Pages 11 to 14)**

10. **SOHCS makes explicit to students, via the Programme Handbook, the means by which they will receive feedback on assessed work and the timeframe within which it will be provided**

The School's policy with regard to the ways in which students will receive feedback on assessed work and the timescales involved has been further developed and it is now made clear in the Academic Handbook that students will be provided with an assessment schedule to indicate when each piece of assessment is due for submission, when they may expect to receive a mark for that piece of assessed work, and when they may expect to get feedback. References to this have been included in the Programme Handbooks.

11. **SOHCS ensures that the BSc Radiotherapy & Oncology Handbook includes Assessment Criteria or a cross reference to the Academic Handbook criteria**

The Handbook for the BSc in Radiotherapy and Oncology now makes explicit reference to the assessment criteria included in the Academic Handbook.

12. **SOHCS makes the process of arriving at exam papers more explicit via the Academic Handbook**

The Academic Handbook has been amended to make clearer the process by which examination papers are developed and set.

13. **SOHCS considers further the consistency of approach and level of challenge in assessment across its Departments**

The School has reviewed the consistency of its approach and the level of challenge involved in assessments across departments within the School. Criteria for grading assessments for the whole School are included in the Academic Handbook and staff are being asked to ensure they follow the logic of these criteria.

14. **SOHCS informs the students involved in the Research Methods that the Board of Studies has considered the student comments, and is attempting to improve the way feedback is provided on this module**

The School has looked into the issues involved in giving feedback on the research methods module at postgraduate level and has informed students of the way feedback will be provided in the future.

- 15. SOHCS considers the comment by students that they would appreciate a robust critique at all levels of the programme, both on written and practical work, in order to clearly identify how to improve**

Guidance has been given to staff on ways to ensure that a robust critique of all written and practical work is given to students which identifies ways in which students may improve their work. This will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

- 16. SOHCS considers the student suggestion regarding reinforcement of academic integrity issues throughout the programmes**

In all the handbooks provided by the School issues relating to academic integrity have been considered and in many cases the wording reinforced. Programme Managers will ensure that these issues are dealt with orally at appropriate times during each programme.

#### **PUBLISHED INFORMATION (Pages 14 to 16)**

- 17. SOHCS continues with its efforts to achieve greater consistency across the School's Handbooks**

The School believes that much greater consistency has been achieved across the School Handbooks and further efforts have gone into this in the preparation of handbooks for the 2009/2010 academic session. The School intends to set up a regular review on an annual basis to ensure that this consistency is maintained and where appropriate enhanced. In general where requirements are similar in different programmes the Academic Handbook will provide the defining guidance on these issues.

- 18. SOHCS continues with its plan to develop the School-level Undergraduate Student Handbook into a generic Student Handbook for all students**

The School has now developed a Student Handbook based on the previous Undergraduates Student Handbook and this will be issued to all students whether undergraduate or postgraduate at the commencement of the coming session.

- 19. SOHCS ensures that Programme Handbooks contain cross-references to the additional information in the Academic Handbook and generic Student Handbook**

Substantial additional cross references have been added to various Programme Handbooks to ensure that appropriate reference is made to the Academic Handbook and to the Student Handbook.

- 20. SOHCS considers producing a student-friendly Programme Handbook for the BSc Occupational Therapy (Part time) programme, in line with the Handbooks produced for the other programmes in the School**

The Part Time BSc Occupational Therapy Programme Handbook has been revised in line with the other Programme Handbooks for issue at the beginning of the coming academic session.

#### **SUPPORT TO STUDENTS (Pages 17 to 21)**

- 21. SOHCS ensures that the Handbooks for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students explicitly address the issue of monitoring academic progress**

Issues relating to the monitoring of academic progress are now fully covered in the Academic Handbook and references made to this in the various Programme Handbooks for both Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students.

- 22. SOHCS makes it clear to students via the Programme Handbooks that Personal Tutors will signpost them to more appropriate academic support**

The section on personal tutoring in the Academic Handbook makes clear that it is the role of personal tutors to signpost students to more appropriate academic support when needed and reference to this is made in the different Programme Handbooks at both Undergraduate and Postgraduate level.

- 23. SOHCS aligns the School Personal Tutor statement fully with the University framework by specifying how to access assistance during any absences of the Personal Tutor (short term or long term)**

The statement in the Academic Handbook which is cross referenced in Programme Handbooks now makes it explicit how students may obtain assistance during any absence of their personal tutor, whether short term or long term.

- 24. SOHCS ensures that the Student Handbook and Programme Handbooks for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students provide a cross reference to the School Personal Tutor Statement in the Academic Handbook**

The Student Handbook and Programme Handbooks for both Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students now provide cross referencing to the much fuller School Personal Tutoring Statement included in the Academic Handbook.

**25. SOHCS continues with its plans to improve feedback to students on their involvement in the School's various Quality mechanisms**

The School has now developed a policy to ensure an improvement in feedback to students on their involvement in the School's various quality mechanisms and this will be issued to students at the beginning of the coming session.

**26. SOHCS improves the consistency of information provided in the various Handbooks regarding the School's mechanisms for considering student feedback**

The School believes that the information provided in the various Handbooks regarding the School's mechanisms for considering student feedback has been supplemented and this will continue to be monitored over the coming sessions.

**27. SOHCS considers making more explicit its procedures for dealing with situations where a student may not be demonstrating Fitness to Practice, possibly via a policy**

All aspects relating to fitness to practice are now covered in a fuller way in the Academic Handbook and references made to this in other Handbooks. With the changes involved in the introduction of the Independent Safeguarding Authority this policy will be further reviewed during the coming session.

**28. The School considers the student suggestion relating to reinforcement of the support available for dealing with difficult behaviour from patients**

Issues relating to ways in which students may deal with difficult behaviour from patients are being considered as part of a wider programme of making students familiar with ways of dealing with violence and aggression as well as other forms of difficult behaviour from patients and others, and students will be introduced to this during the inter-professional learning day during enrolment week. Ways in which this can be further reinforced during the programmes are being considered and will be implemented in the current session.

## **ISSUES SPECIFIC TO POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS**

**29. The School ensures that the Research Student Handbook makes reference to the induction provision made for student with non-traditional start dates**

The Research Student Handbook has been amended to make explicit reference to the provision of induction for new post graduate research students irrespective of the date on which they start their studies.

## **CONCLUSION**

**30. SOHCS considers the issues highlighted by the questions in the Areas for Review Document as part of its ongoing work in enhancement and**

**reviews the completed QPR document proforma to identify areas that may need to be addressed**

A number of the issues raised in the Areas for Review Document were also covered by some of the QPR Report recommendations and therefore what follows may involve a certain amount of repetition. The actions taken are outlined below.

1. The Terms of Reference of the Senior Management Team have now been included in the Staff Handbook which is being reissued ahead of the start of the new academic session.
2. The School believes that the membership of Committees is largely based on the functional requirements of the School but it has now made it an explicit task for the Equality and Diversity Committee of the School to review Committee membership in full on an annual basis and report thereon with any recommendations to the School Board. Reference to this is now included in the Staff Handbook.
3. A suitable cross reference to the School's Academic Handbook is now included in all postgraduate taught programme handbooks. This makes clear the School's approach to learning and teaching and the strategies that have been developed in that area.
4. Both Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programme Handbooks now specifically make reference to the Academic Handbook of the School which discusses in some detail the contribution which research makes to the curriculum and its delivery.
5. The Handbook for Students taking the BSc in Radiotherapy and Oncology has now been amended to make specific reference to the assessment criteria included in the Academic Handbook.
6. The School's policy with regard to the methods for giving feedback on assessed work and the timescales involved is made explicit in the Academic Handbook and references to this are made in the various Programme Handbooks.
7. The Physiotherapy Handbook has been modified to ensure that students are informed of the procedures covering the nature of feedback and the timescales involved regarding assessed work.
8. The Postgraduate Taught Programme Handbooks now make explicit reference to the Academic Handbook which provides guidance on the methods and timing by which feedback on assessed work is given.
9. Postgraduate Taught Programmes Handbooks now make explicit reference to both the Academic Handbook and the Student Handbook (this is a

modification of the earlier Undergraduate Student Handbook which now encompasses all taught course students).

- 10.** The part time BSc Occupational Therapy Students will now be issued with a Programme Handbook of the same type as that issued for other schemes within the School.
- 11.** The Physiotherapy Handbook has been amended to include page numbers.
- 12.** Both the Research Student Handbook and the Postgraduate Taught Programme Handbooks have now been amended to make reference to mechanisms for raising complaints of harassment or other unlawful discrimination.
- 13.** All Programme Handbooks have now been amended to make explicit cross reference to the Academic Handbook which details at some length the ways in which students' academic progress is monitored.
- 14.** Programme Handbooks now make explicit reference to the Academic Handbook which provides information on how students who are not coping well will be identified and appropriate action taken to support them.
- 15.** The Academic Handbook section covering the personal tutoring system has been amended to make explicit the ways in which students may obtain assistance during short term absences of their personal tutor. The Student Handbook (formerly the Undergraduate Student Handbook) now formally cross references a much fuller section on personal tutoring in the Academic Handbook.
- 16.** Postgraduate Taught Handbooks now make explicit reference to processes for PDP and the support available, and cross references the relevant section in the Academic Handbook.
- 17.** The BSc Occupational Therapy Level 1 Handbook now makes explicit reference to the Student-Staff Panel and how students may obtain feedback from it.
- 18.** The Post Graduate Taught Programme Handbooks now make explicit reference to the mechanisms for students to make their views known to the School through Student-Staff Panels and feedback questionnaires.