

**For the Academic Policy &
Regulations Committee
9th October 2008**

University of Birmingham

**Request for exemption from Regulations concerning the number of
credits in a module for the MA in Learning and Teaching in Vocational
Subjects, delivered at University College Birmingham, and on the
related Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate**

Topic and Purpose of the Paper

1. To justify 15 and 30 credit modules in the MA/PG Dip/PG Cert in Learning and Teaching in Vocational Subjects which was validated for delivery at University College Birmingham on 8 July 2008.

Consultation

2. Consultation on the structure of the awards was undertaken with staff of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in order to ensure that successful participants would qualify for membership and those completing the MA for Senior Membership of the Academy, and Standards Verification UK, the body responsible for verification of Initial Teacher Training and Continuing Professional Development Awards in the Lifelong Learning Sector as a part of the Institute for Learning. As further parts of its extensive consultation while developing these awards, the University College consulted widely, including with senior representatives of Birmingham Local Authority responsible for the professional development of teachers with responsibilities for the new 14 -1 9 Diplomas.
3. Consultation regarding the Exemption from Regulations was undertaken with Academic and Student Administration.

Proposals/Recommendations

4. That Exemption 6.1.2 (g), which requires the credit values of modules to be expressed in terms of multiples of 10 credits, shall be suspended for the MA in Learning and Teaching in Vocational Subjects, and the related Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate.
5. That these programmes shall be allowed to offer modules with a credit value of 15 credits.
6. That this exemption shall last as long as the programmes continue to offer 15 credit modules.

Background

7. Consultation established that a PG Cert should consist of 60 Masters Level Credits with a substantial mandatory core and the choice of one large or two smaller options to reflect individual needs.
8. The consensus, presented to the Validation Committee on 8 July 2008, was that the PG Cert should contain a 'core' worth 30 credits and a range of

options, some of which would be demanding enough on their own to meet the requirements of the PG Cert award, and some of which should be small enough to be 'short and fat' professional development activities. Not more than 2 options should be required in order to achieve the award.

9. In anticipation of the characteristics of the student body, it was decided that some of the option modules would be offered for 'block mode delivery, compressed intense learning experiences, with assessment focused on conference style presentations during which participants would learn for interaction with fellow professionals. The challenge was to measure this volume of learning with reasonable accuracy.
10. Because the new modules would be delivered in intense blocks they were less demanding in terms of tutor contact time than any existing Masters modules offered by the University College and, on the basis of the demand for a substantial amount of research and development activities to be carried out by participants within their own work environment, 150 hours of application was anticipated in order to achieve the learning outcomes, with 20 hours to be allocated for direct tutor support.

Arguments to Support Proposals/Recommendations

11. This approach to the volume of learning leads to a simple formula of 15, 30 and 60 credit modules contributing to 60, 120 and 180 credit awards. If the structure had included 10, 20 and 30 credit options, the permutations would have been far more complex and the credit values a less accurate account of the volume of learning involved.
12. Both the Higher Education Academy consultant (Alan Davis) and the Institute for Teaching and Learning advisors (Mary Corbally and Sara Rudge) agreed that this structure facilitated the mapping of modules against their organisations' professional standards and would be practical for the purpose of credit accumulation and transfer.

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