

## STAGE 1 PROGRAMME APPROVAL REPORT

**Proposal:**

BSc Speech and Language Therapy  
MSc Speech and Language Therapy  
MSc Speech and Language Therapy (Integrated)

**Board of Studies:** School of Health Sciences

**Committee:**

Professor David Bolton (DVC and Chair)  
Dr Pam Parker (LEaD)  
Mr Justin Scott (Marketing and Communications)  
Prof Stuart Sime (City Law School)  
Prof Martin Caraher (School of Arts and Social Sciences)  
Ms Alison Edridge (Student and Academic Services)  
Ms Claire Stack (Student and Academic Services-secretary)

**Decision:**

Approved with conditions  
and a recommendation

**Date:** 25<sup>th</sup> August 2016

**Stage 1 documents:**

Stage 1 Form  
Draft programme specification  
Financial spreadsheet and sign-off  
Space Request Form  
PARC minutes

**Proposed implementation date:** September 2016

**Outcome of discussion:**

The proposal was approved with conditions and a recommendation:

1. To fully articulate what the benefits would be for students in undertaking the Integrated Masters rather than the BSc, given that students exiting with the 3 year BSc will still meet the requirements for professional registration. Furthermore to demonstrate how the 'innovative' nature of the Integrated Masters route would be reflected in the marketing of the programme and the likelihood of students remaining for the fourth year after completing their BSc. Given the small number of students predicted to progress to the Integrated Masters, the response to this condition should also address the potential impact on the student experience of a small cohort.
2. To consider whether the proposed start date of September 2017 is realistic given that the School will not be able to make offers until Stage 2 approval is achieved including meeting any Stage 2 conditions. Further details of the timeline involved in offer making for both the BSc/Integrated Masters and the standalone MSc should be provided.
3. To change the award title for the Integrated Masters route from 'MSc' so that there is sufficient differentiation between this route and the standalone 2 year MSc. The standard practice at City, which is also common practice within the sector, is for the award title of an integrated masters to reflect the subject area. Current examples at City are MEng, MMath, MOptom and MSci Computer Science. If the School wishes to retain the MSc title, a rationale would need to be

provided which would require approval by Senate prior to marketing. Previous discussions by Senate suggest that Senate approval of MSc as a title for an Integrated Masters would be highly unlikely.

4. To confirm which professional accreditations are offered on each degree and to ensure this is reflected in the accreditation section of all programme specifications. Currently the Integrated Masters and the MSc do not appear to list recognition by the Royal College of SLTs.
5. To conform to the standard maximum periods of registration stated in the University Assessment Regulations (6 years for BSc, 7 years for Integrated Masters) unless there is a valid reason for exemption. If this is the case then a written rationale should be provided for inclusion in the Programme Regulations if approved.
6. To ensure that within the calculation of the overall aggregate mark for the degree and exit awards, that the weightings of each Part of the BSc and Integrated Masters programmes conform with the requirements in Senate Regulation 15 (UG Programmes). Please refer to Paragraph 13b of Senate Regulation 15 for the requirements.
7. To review and revise the aims and learning outcomes within each programme specification to ensure that they reflect the level of the programme (FHEQ Level 6 or Level 7), and that there is appropriate differentiation of the aims and outcomes between the programmes reflecting the different levels. Additionally, to expand the aims of the BSc within the programme specification.
8. To liaise with LEaD to further enhance programme specifications to provide additional information to students on teaching, learning and assessment in the relevant sections of the specifications.
9. To review and revise the content of the Integrated Masters programme to include learning at Level 6 in the 3rd year. The Committee was concerned that students would not be adequately prepared to undertake Level 7 study after the second year which is at Level 5, and agreed that the programme should be restructured to show clear academic progression through the programme.

The Committee noted that the programme as currently structured did not meet the national guidance on Integrated Masters provision in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the Masters Degree Characteristics statement. In particular, that “integrated masters degrees involve learning across levels 4-7 of the FHEQ”, that “study at bachelors level is integrated with study at masters level and the programmes are designed to meet the qualification descriptors in full at Level 6 of the FHEQ and level 7 of the FHEQ”.

It was noted that the University’s credit framework in line with national guidance requires a minimum of 120 credits at Level 7 for an Integrated Masters programme. The proposed programme had significantly exceeded this with 240 credits at Level 7.

10. To provide further clarity within the programme specifications for the BSc and Integrated Masters as to how students enter the Integrated Masters. The Committee considered that it was not sufficiently clear that admission would only be by transfer from the BSc after the second year

with an overall aggregate mark of at least 60%.

11. To confirm whether current students and those commencing their programmes in 2016/17 will remain on the current SLT programmes or whether it is proposed that they transfer to the new provision. If they will transfer, to provide full details of the proposed transitional arrangements.
12. To address the additional list of revisions provided in programme specifications.

Revised programme specifications should be submitted with the responses to these conditions with the changes clearly highlighted, and will require sign-off by LEaD. The programme team is asked to involve LEaD in the development and consideration of revised documentation within the School prior to seeking LEaD sign-off.

The Committee noted the proposed September 2017 start and the requirement for an HCPC approval visit, the submission deadline for which is 8th September 2016. University Stage 1 approval would be required for submission of the programmes to HCPC. The Committee agreed that approval for 2017/18 would therefore be subject to the above conditions being signed-off prior to the HCPC deadline, as HCPC approval was required for the new programmes to run.

The deadline for submission of the response to the conditions including revised programme documentation is next Friday 2nd September 2016. Please send the documentation to both myself and Alison and we will arrange for it to be considered by the Chair of UPAC as soon as possible.

If the UPAC deadline and therefore the HCPC deadline are not met, a later deadline for the response to the conditions will be agreed for approval for 2018/19 entry.

### **Summary of discussion:**

#### **1. Rationale for the proposal**

In November 2015, as part of the comprehensive spending review, it was announced that from 2017-18 the NHS would no longer fund health programmes. Currently the NHS commissioned and funded places on the 4 year BSc in Speech and Language Therapy programme.

As a result of the cuts the School was concerned that the current length of the programme would make it uncompetitive within the new funding framework. The proposed changes would result in a 3 year BSc Honours programme with the option for an Integrated MSc programme. The option of the integrated MSc route was innovative as it was not currently available within Speech and Language Therapy and would allow City to lead the way in this area.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Speech and Language Therapy was also currently funded by the NHS. This was a 2 year programme which enabled students to apply for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council to work as a Speech and Language Therapist. Students currently had the option to convert their Postgraduate Diploma to a Master's degree by completing a research project. This had to be completed within two years of finishing the Postgraduate Diploma and students had to pay a fee for the conversion, currently set at £2000. The majority of Postgraduate Speech and Language Therapy programmes at competitor universities result in an MSc in Speech and Language Therapy and did not

require this additional conversion.

Again the School was concerned that the current need to complete an additional conversion element to get to a Master's level qualification would make it uncompetitive within the new funding framework. The proposal was to upgrade the current programme from a Post Graduate Diploma to a Master's programme by adding a Research Project Element into the initial two years of training.

## **2. Market research and marketing**

The Committee were concerned about what the benefits would be for students in undertaking the Integrated Masters rather than the BSc, given that students exiting with the 3 year BSc would still meet the requirements for professional registration. It was agreed that the Programme team would need to provide better rationale for why the degree would be attractive as a four year programme and ensure this was explicit in the marketing of the Programme.

The Committee noted that although reference had been made to the innovative nature of the proposed Integrated Masters route it was not evident how this would be reflected in the marketing of the programme and that no indication had been given as to the likelihood of students remaining for the fourth year after completing their BSc.

Concern was also expressed about how the small number of students predicted to progress to the Integrated Masters would impact on the student experience of a small cohort.

Whilst the Committee understood the need to react quickly in the current funding climate it was concerned whether the proposed start date of September 2017 was realistic given that the School would not be able to make offers until Stage 2 approval was achieved including meeting any Stage 2 conditions. The Committee requested that further details of the timelines involved in offer making for both the BSc/Integrated Masters and the standalone MSc should be provided.

In terms of the proposed award title for the Integrated Masters route, the Committee agreed that there was not sufficient differentiation between this route and the standalone 2 year MSc. The standard practice at City, which was also common practice within the sector, was for the award title of an integrated masters to reflect the subject area. If the School did wish to retain the MSc title, a rationale would need to be provided which would require approval by Senate prior to marketing. Previous discussions by Senate suggested that Senate approval of MSc as a title for an Integrated Masters would be highly unlikely.

## **3. Programme content**

The Committee noted

To confirm which professional accreditations are offered on each degree and to ensure this is reflected in the accreditation section of all programme specifications. Currently the Integrated Masters and the MSc do not appear to list recognition by the Royal College of SLTs.

5. To conform to the standard maximum periods of registration stated in the University Assessment Regulations (6 years for BSc, 7 years for Integrated Masters) unless there is a valid reason for exemption. If this is the case then a written rationale should be provided for inclusion in the Programme Regulations if approved.

6. To ensure that within the calculation of the overall aggregate mark for the degree and

exit awards, that the weightings of each Part of the BSc and Integrated Masters programmes conform with the requirements in Senate Regulation 15 (UG Programmes). Please refer to Paragraph 13b of Senate Regulation 15 for the requirements.

7. To review and revise the aims and learning outcomes within each programme specification to ensure that they reflect the level of the programme (FHEQ Level 6 or Level 7), and that there is appropriate differentiation of the aims and outcomes between the programmes reflecting the different levels. Additionally, to expand the aims of the BSc within the programme specification.

8. To liaise with LEaD to further enhance programme specifications to provide additional information to students on teaching, learning and assessment in the relevant sections of the specifications.

9. To review and revise the content of the Integrated Masters programme to include learning at Level 6 in the 3rd year. The Committee was concerned that students would not be adequately prepared to undertake Level 7 study after the second year which is at Level 5, and agreed that the programme should be restructured to show clear academic progression through the programme.

The Committee noted that the programme as currently structured did not meet the national guidance on Integrated Masters provision in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the Masters Degree Characteristics statement. In particular, that “integrated masters degrees involve learning across levels 4-7 of the FHEQ”, that “study at bachelors level is integrated with study at masters level and the programmes are designed to meet the qualification descriptors in full at Level 6 of the FHEQ and level 7 of the FHEQ”.

It was noted that the University’s credit framework in line with national guidance requires a minimum of 120 credits at Level 7 for an Integrated Masters programme. The proposed programme had significantly exceeded this with 240 credits at Level 7.

10. To provide further clarity within the programme specifications for the BSc and Integrated Masters as to how students enter the Integrated Masters. The Committee considered that it was not sufficiently clear that admission would only be by transfer from the BSc after the second year with an overall aggregate mark of at least 60%.

11. To confirm whether current students and those commencing their programmes in 2016/17 will remain on the current SLT programmes or whether it is proposed that they transfer to the new provision. If they will transfer, to provide full details of the proposed transitional arrangements.

12. To address the additional list of revisions provided in programme specifications.

#### **4. Resources**

Linked to the discussion around whether there was a market beyond the TWf, the Committee was concerned about whether the proposed student numbers in the submission were achievable and what impact this would have on the costings for the programme. The Committee also considered that the staffing costs set out in the financial information were low given the expected use of visiting lecturers to deliver the programme. The Committee agreed that in addition to clarifying the market rationale, the financial rationale should also be clarified including student numbers, staff costs and the proportion of visiting lecturers.

Claire Stack  
Student and Academic Services  
August 2016