

**Periodic Review Report Template**

<b>School</b>	<b>Newcastle Business School</b>
<b>Discipline Name</b>	<b>NBS Postgraduate Programmes (excluding Accounting &amp; Financial Management)</b>
<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>8 / 9 December 2011</b>
<b>Review Panel</b> (approved by Review Sub-Committee)	<p>Internal Members:</p> <p>Lesley Matthews (Chair): Associate Dean, School of the Built &amp; Natural Environment</p> <p>Vanessa Gibson: Teaching Fellow, School of Health, Community &amp; Education Studies</p> <p>Keith Anderson: UG Programme Director, Newcastle Business School</p> <p>Students' Union Member:</p> <p>Holly Seabrook: Students' Union Vice President, Communications and Involvement</p> <p>External Member:</p> <p>Professor Caroline Rowland: Professor of Leadership &amp; Management, University of Chester</p> <p>Facilitator:</p> <p>Sally Iles, Learning &amp; Teaching Co-ordinator, Quality Support, Academic Registry</p>
<b>Method of Review</b>	This review was conducted using the periodic review procedure defined in Northumbria's Review Handbook (2011 version), available from <a href="http://northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/qualitysupport/review/intrev/">http://northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/qualitysupport/review/intrev/</a>

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Discipline Aims and Context</b>
<p>Within Newcastle Business School (NBS) each Programme is derived from the School vision and mission statements, the latter stating that "<i>Newcastle Business School develops individuals to achieve their leadership and management potential and to make a difference to organisations</i>", this being achieved with incorporation of international business, professional practice and leadership and management development and distinctiveness achieved through "<i>the development of individuals through personal and professional development that emphasises independent and reflective learning, criticality and employability</i>".</p> <p>The Corporate and Executive Development Portfolio (CED) within Newcastle Business School (NBS) offers Programmes that are predominantly bespoke, designed to a specific client's needs. Students are recruited from a narrower base of a single company, or are sector specific, where the nature of the students is that in general they are more experienced and have management and leadership experiences that they can draw on to contextualise the learning process. The overarching CED philosophy is based upon challenging the assumptions of leaders and managers, creating attitudinal and behavioural shifts alongside new knowledge. Given their employment experience, they have rich contextual landscapes to extract their assumptions from and then apply their new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Within CED our philosophy of learning is demonstrated through our practice of making it relevant, interactive, participative, refreshing, fun and highly applicable to learners' own roles or aspirations and the needs of the organisation. Learners are encouraged to challenge existing individual and organisational practices through critical evaluation underpinned by contemporary research and management theory. The principles which underpin the CED Postgraduate philosophy include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The CED provision is research underpinned although designed to develop practice and/or evaluate the skills of reflective practice.</li> <li>2. Modules use the academic expertise of staff and are informed by their own and wider discipline</li> </ol>	

research.

3. Assessment, both formative and summative, forms an integral part of the learning experience.
4. Modules develop both knowledge and intellectual skills and are supported by electronic learning materials.

The Postgraduate Portfolio is a longstanding provider of Masters Programmes, targeting local, national and international students. Its Programmes offer a combination of conversion (for participants with a first degree other than business or management), specialist (for participants who wish to build on a relevant business or management first degree) and post-experience Programmes (for participants with appropriate amounts and levels of work experience). Each of the Programmes have been designed with the explicit intention of contributing to the University and derived NBS vision and mission statements, the latter stating that "*Newcastle Business School develops individuals to achieve their leadership and management potential and to make a difference to organisations*", this being achieved with incorporation of international business, professional practice and leadership and management development and distinctiveness achieved through "*the development of individuals through personal and professional development that emphasises independent and reflective learning, criticality and employability*". With this in mind, a number of principles exist that underpin the Postgraduate Goals and Learning Objectives as well as the associated learning, teaching and assessment philosophies that are common to this suite of Postgraduate Programmes. These are:

- The PG provision will have a common set of core Modules and activities which involve all students; specialist Programme based Modules and a clear philosophy expressed through our Goals and Objectives.
- The PG provision will be research underpinned in line with the University and School missions that will allow advanced entry for our Postgraduates onto the DBA Programme.
- Modules use the academic expertise of staff and are informed by their own and wider discipline research.
- Assessment, both formative and summative, will form an integral part of the learning experience.
- Each Module will develop both knowledge and intellectual skills and will be supported by electronic learning materials as appropriate.
- Learning and assessment will be designed to develop practice and/or evaluate the skills of reflective practice.

## Section 2

## Curricula and Standards

### **The Panel identified the following strengths:**

- The 'Developing Self' Residential Events help integrate the diverse student groups and facilitate the development of self reflection and confidence in students.
- Integration of research, to inform teaching and learning.
- The emphasis on the reflective practitioner which is in line with current academic and professional best practice.
- The emphasis on transferable knowledge and skills which is evidenced by alignment and accreditation with EPAS, CIPD and other recognised bodies.
- The utilisation of teachers and materials across programmes in the provision.
- The CED postgraduate programmes focus on 'learning to learn' is crucial for managers; and was recognised by employers as 'adding value'.

### **The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:**

- As some CED students reported difficulties in returning to study, it may be useful to revisit the induction process. Although help was given freely when requested, it was felt that some early sessions on assignment structure, bibliography formulation and study skills would enhance the learning experience.

<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Management Information Trends</b>
<p><b>The Panel identified the following strengths:</b></p> <p><b>The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The panel suggests that NBS reviews its recruitment strategy with a focus on attracting students with good applied language skills.</li> <li>• The panel would encourage the team to explore ways of collecting data regarding international student employment destinations. This could be used for the purposes of enhancing marketing activities.</li> <li>• The panel suggest that the University reviews its requirements regarding the award of Distinction, Commendation and Pass.</li> </ul>	

<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Student Experience</b>
<p><b>The Panel identified the following strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The panel recognises a high degree of student support offered by academic and non-academic staff, evidenced by strong student satisfaction.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The emphasis on assignments at the end of modules is causing anxiety. The bunching of January assignments should be avoided by instituting a more flexible approach to assignments e.g. considering some smaller assignments taking less time with hand ins after a couple of weeks.</li> <li>• The Business School to reflect on how it can better facilitate a Students' Union presence.</li> <li>• The panel noted that the Corporate Portfolio has moved to word processed feedback and recommend that the rest of the provision moves to that approach.</li> </ul>	

<b>Section 5</b>	<b>Enhancement Strategies</b>
<p><b>The Panel identified the following strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmes are closely aligned with professional bodies. Many result in both academic and professional accreditation awards. This is seen as adding value to student employability.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject Teams to review assessment strategies to ensure that students are provided with earlier opportunities for feedback to inform future learning and self development.</li> </ul>	

<b>Section 6</b>	<b>Discipline Response to Report</b>
<p><b>Curricula and Standards</b></p> <p><i>As some CED students reported difficulties in returning to study, it may be useful to revisit the induction process. Although help was given freely when requested, it was felt that some early sessions on assignment structure, bibliography formulation and study skills would enhance the learning experience. CED Programmes now have a full induction day, as well as academic practice and study skills embedded which is continuous and ongoing.</i></p> <p><b>Management Information Trends</b></p> <p><i>The panel suggests that NBS reviews its recruitment strategy with a focus on attracting students with good applied language skills.</i></p> <p>We are in the market for students at IELTS 6.5 and are achieving high levels of student progression and achievement, as observed by the Progression and Awards Boards. Timely information is passed to the School's Recruitment Director where student performance, individually in cases of particularly poor profiles or by programme or national cohort within a programme have been identified. A university-wide scholarship</p>	

scheme based on merit has been introduced for 2013/14 recruitment.

*The panel would encourage the team to explore ways of collecting data regarding international student employment destinations. This could be used for the purposes of enhancing marketing activities.*

The University Head of Careers and Employment advised the School that the response rate had been very low and that international students would be included in the official DHLE survey. It may be possible to gather some interim data for the School, although this cannot commence until after the DHLE survey period. Once available this data and analysis will be made available to the Programme Management Team.

*The panel suggest that the University reviews its requirements regarding the award of Distinction, Commendation and Pass.*

The external member of the Periodic Review Panel had commented on the narrow percentage marking range between the award of a postgraduate degree with distinction, commendation or pass. This had been reviewed by the Regulations & Frameworks Sub-Committee however it was decided not to alter the classification criteria. Research indicated that other universities employed a similar marking range and the withdrawal of this model would make postgraduate awards at Northumbria appear less attractive.

### **Student Experience**

*The emphasis on assignments at the end of modules is causing anxiety. The bunching of January assignments should be avoided by instituting a more flexible approach to assignments e.g. considering some smaller assignments taking less time with hand ins after a couple of weeks.*

- Corporate and Executive Development Portfolio: This matter not is considered an issue for this portfolio, modules run sequentially therefore there is no bunching of assessments.
- Postgraduate Portfolio: In a semester structure there are two peak assessment periods in January and May for the September start students and in May and August for the January start students. Assessment is spread to avoid bunching, the programme office ensures spacing so that multiple submission on the same day is avoided wherever possible, although in January and August this presents more of a challenge with one week's window.

*The Business School to reflect on how it can better facilitate a Students' Union presence.*

Discussions have taken place between the School Executive, portfolio representatives and Students' Union representatives to provide feedback and ways to move forward.

*The panel noted that the Corporate Portfolio has moved to word processed feedback and recommend that the rest of the provision moves to that approach.*

Pilots on typed feedback are being evaluated by both portfolios in the context of cohort size and the bespoke nature of some assessments. Alternative methods of feedback are being explored whilst recognising University discussions about an electronic tool for submission, marking and feedback.

### **Enhancement Strategies**

*Subject Teams to review assessment strategies to ensure that students are provided with earlier opportunities for feedback to inform future learning and self development.*

The portfolios issued assessment strategy documents to inform Subject Groups' work prior to the Subject Academic Board (SAB) week. Assessment strategies (formative and summative) were reviewed as part of the SAB process on a module by module basis. The School Approvals and Modifications Sub-Committee reviewed and approved amendments to assessment strategies arising from these reviews.