

Periodic Review Report Template

School	Health, Community & Education Studies
Discipline Name	Social Work & Community
Date of Review	3 / 4 March 2011
Review Panel (approved by University Learning and Teaching Committee)	<p>Internal Members:</p> <p>Professor Rosie Cunningham (Chair)</p> <p>Ann Macfadyen</p> <p>Dr Mark Moss</p> <p>Students' Union Member:</p> <p>Adam White</p> <p>External Member:</p> <p>Nigel Horner</p> <p>Facilitator:</p> <p>Sally Iles</p>
Method of Review	This review was conducted using the periodic review procedure defined in Northumbria's Review Handbook (2008 version), available from http://northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/qualitysupport/review/intrev/

Section 1	Discipline Aims and Context
<p>Short summary of scope of review – programmes or programme areas included, total student and staff numbers.</p> <p>BSc (Hons) Social Work; BSc (Hons) Social Work AWBL; MA Social Work; BA (Hons) Joint Honours programmes in: Guidance and Counselling; Care and Education Early Years; Children, Play and Playwork; Childhood studies; Disability Studies; Health in Contemporary Society; Professional Practice Studies; BA (Hons) Early Years Professional Studies; BA (Hons) Learning in Families, Schools and Beyond; BA (Hons) Applied Parenting and Family Studies; Higher Education Cert Teaching Assistants.</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> 43 <u>Student numbers:</u> 883 FT and 247 PT</p> <p>Short statement of the main aims of the discipline.</p> <p>The discipline area aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop graduate skills (and where appropriate postgraduate) and subject knowledge and expertise to enable the full potential of students to be achieved and to enhance their employability through a range of learning opportunities. These opportunities are designed to promote the intellectual and critical skills necessary for potential future career pathways. • Ensure that all students on the programmes that lead to professional awards are equipped with the relevant knowledge, skills and values that meet professional body requirements and enable them to develop as reflective practitioners. Research and practice engagement are fundamental to the development of practitioners that are 'fit for purpose'¹. 	

¹ E.g. GSCC (2008) *Fit for Purpose: the Social Work Degree in 2008 Executive Summary* GSCC; Social Work Task Force (2009) *Building a Safe and Confident Future*

- Demonstrate excellence in learning and teaching, informed by research and scholarship, in both discipline and practice, and which places the student at the centre of those processes.
- Encourage students to be active learners through challenging and contemporary modes of teaching delivery in accordance with the University's learning and teaching strategy. The discipline area aims to promote a culture of learning which nurtures, celebrates and recognises individual contribution and achievement.
- To pursue and develop research and enterprise at the cutting edge of knowledge and policy development and support its implementation and application to practice. Provision is based on high quality research, up to date knowledge and scholarship.
- Enable students to work independently, critically reflect on their own learning and develop skills in effective communication and information literacy.
- Maintain and develop appropriate opportunities for academic staff to pursue personal and professional development through research, scholarly activity, community, regional and social engagement to promote the generation and dissemination of knowledge and understanding.
- In accordance with the University's commitment to widening participation and in response to employer demand, programmes are delivered on a flexible and part time basis where appropriate.
- Engage with appropriate internal and external communities in the development of activities which recognise culture and diversity, and which enhance both individuals and society, and to engage with and develop partnerships within the University as well as locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Short statement of any necessary contextual information (eg physical and organisational location, any recent restructuring etc).

- The provision is based at Coach Lane Campus.
- Both the BSc (Hons) Social Work and MA Social Work lead to the combined academic and professional award of social work. Following a revision of the QAA Benchmark statement and the introduction of new regulatory principles, the BSc (Hons) Social Work underwent full revalidation and regulatory body approval in 2008 and the MA Social Work underwent full validation and regulatory body approval in November 2009.
- The Joint Honours programme underwent full revalidation in 2010 in order to align the route titles and content with recent developments in the market and workforce. This was carried out in consultation with employers in order to highlight graduate attributes, employability and workplace involvement.
- Subject to validation, a new programme entitled *BA (Hons) Integrated Working* will replace the BA (Hons) Learning in Families, Schools and Beyond, BA (Hons) Early Years Professional Studies and BA (Hons) Applied Parenting and Family Studies from September 2011. The content of the new programme will respond to and reflect the most recent developments in the children's workforce. Consultation has taken place and the change has been approved by local authority partners.

Observation

The panel noted that the cluster of provision we were looking at gave us a good awareness of the interconnection between social work and the children's workforce development. However, the current organisational structure limited our view of the wider interconnections that are likely to be taking place and which are essential for future-proofing your business.

The School to give consideration to including post-registration social work programmes alongside UG provision in any future review.

Section 2	Curricula and Standards
<p>The Panel identified the following strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curricula across the discipline area are appropriately informed by professional requirements, Benchmark Statements and other academic infrastructures and directly related to professional practice and the needs of future graduates, including Joint Honours graduates. • Standards are routinely and consistently confirmed by External Examiner Reports and employer and student feedback. • The social work programmes are directly relevant to the needs of regional and other employers and the challenges facing the profession. • The Children’s Workforce and related programmes are perceived by employers as enhancing both the individual practitioners and services overall. • The Joint Honours programmes provide a strong foundation for future professional training and a strong basis for immediate employment. • Curriculum development keeps abreast of changes in the policy and funding environment and is sufficiently flexible to meet new demands as these arise. • Staff are committed to inter-professional working and enhancing opportunities for further curriculum development. • Teaching is underpinned by staff research and by strategies to further enhance this relationship across the programme area. 	
Section 3	Management Information Trends
<p>The Panel identified the following strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are aware of equality issues and have put in place mechanisms to improve the diversity of recruitment and support for black and ethnic minority students. • The flexibility of programmes assists in attracting and supporting students from non-traditional backgrounds. 	
Section 4	Student Experience
<p>The Panel identified the following strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are very well prepared for employment. This is particularly notable in the BSc and MA Social Work programmes where both students and employers are extremely appreciative of the partnerships built between the University and areas of practice. • The links with employers and the partnerships that have developed over the years between the University and practice are exemplary and demonstrate a high degree of trust and loyalty between staff and practitioners that students clearly benefit from. • Employers are integral to programme design and delivery including student selection, assessment and teaching. • Teaching is of high quality with clear evidence of enhancement initiatives taking place across the provision. • A robust guidance system is in place across the provision and students are confident about where to go if they experience any difficulties. • Staff are responsive to students concerns and implement changes to delivery and/or assessment where appropriate. • Resources are well managed as evidenced by good practice in the establishment of the Placements Office, the Assignment Receiving Office and the work undertaken to improve the estate in relation to teaching accommodation. • The Learning Technologies Development Team provides high quality support for the eLearning platform and distance learning materials. 	

The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:

- To recommend that Academic Services provide reception-desk support in the library from 8 a.m.
- To recommend that the Joint Honours programme further highlights employability opportunities available to students within the programme.

Section 5

Enhancement Strategies

The Panel identified the following strengths:

- Enhancement activities are embedded in provision and linked into programme management and staff development events. There is a high level of innovation in enhancement activity and a commitment to disseminating initiatives to a wider audience within and beyond the University.

Section 6

Discipline Response to Report

Student Experience

To recommend that Academic Services provide reception-desk support in the library from 8 a.m.
During term times Coach Lane Library is open Monday- Friday 8.00 a.m. – midnight, and Saturday-Sunday 9.00 a.m. – midnight. Throughout all the opening hours there is a staffed Welcome Desk service, and students are able to use the self-service machines to borrow and return books. Full-staffed services start on weekdays at 9.00 a.m. which include enquiry services and borrowing enquiries. Opening hours and service levels are regularly reviewed in conjunction with annual user satisfaction surveys and other feedback received. The Library is currently in discussion with HCES regarding usage patterns and how they can inform future opening hours development. From January 2012 the Coach Lane Campus library is open from 7 a.m. (previously it was 8 a.m.) on weekdays on a self service basis until fully staffed services commence at 9 a.m. This represents an increase of 5 hours per week and use of the library during these additional hours will be monitored and reviewed in the summer of 2012.

To recommend that the Joint Honours programme further highlights employability opportunities available to students within the programme.
Employability continues to be addressed through the revalidated Joint Honours programme which is now nearing the end of the second year. The 'spine modules' at each level ensure that all students are engaging in making links between academic study and the reality of paid work. Discussions are taking place between the Joint Honours team and a local authority regarding the possibility of providing new graduates with employment and training opportunities in the children and young people's workforce. This initiative is now reaching fruition and about to be made available to the current level 5 students. The partnership work will offer students opportunities to gain work experience in services for children and families during their second and third years of study, followed by guaranteed interviews for paid employment on graduation.