SUMMARY OF THE PERIODIC REVIEW OF DEGREES IN
THE SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

1. Programmes covered by the Periodic Review

The following programmes were reviewed:

- MA/Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling
- BA in Social Work
- BA in Social Work (Employment route)
- BA in Social Work (part-time)

The following programmes, which commenced in October 2007, were not reviewed:

- Postgraduate Diploma/Higher specialist award in Social Work with Children and Young People, their Families and Carers
- Postgraduate Diploma/Higher specialist award in Practice Education in Social Work
- Postgraduate Diploma/Higher specialist award in Leadership and Management in Social Work
- Certificate in Introduction to Psychodynamic Theory and Counselling Skills
- BA/specialist award in Social Work with Children and Young People, their Families and Carers


3. Objectives of the Periodic Review

The objectives of the Periodic Review were to:

- Monitor the quality and standards of the degree programmes under Review;

- Enable the Department of History to evaluate its taught programme provision, particularly student achievement of the appropriate academic standards, and the learning opportunities offered to students;

- To enable an independent Panel to review this self-evaluation through consideration of documentation and discussions with staff and students;

- Provide a means by which the School was able to reflect on the success, development and possible improvement of its taught programmes;

- Ask fundamental questions about the rationale, structure and resourcing of the programmes under Review;
• Consider the educational aims and objectives of the programmes;

• Review teaching, learning and methods of assessment in their contexts;

• Consider whether the programmes under Review should continue to run for a further period of up to six years.

4. Conduct of the Periodic Review

The Periodic Review was conducted by Panel chaired by the Director of Teaching and Learning of the University’s School of Languages and European Studies, and also comprising two other internal members of academic staff (neither from the School of Health and Social Care), two members of staff from other universities, and two representatives of service users and carers.

The Panel received a range of documentation in advance of the Review, including a Self-Evaluation Document prepared by the School and also relevant programme specifications. During the Review visit, the Panel considered other documentation and met with relevant staff from the School, with current students studying on the degree programmes under review, with former students, and with various service users and carers.

5. Evidence Base

In addition to the meetings held with academic staff and current students, the Panel considered a wide range of evidence, including examples of student work, copies of programme handbooks, minutes of relevant committees and statistical data. The Panel was able to see External Examiners reports for the three previous years, as well as comprehensive responses written by the Head of School.

6. External peer contributors to process

The external members of the Panel were present for the duration of the Periodic Review. They were appointed by the Board for Teaching and Learning of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences after considering nominations from the School of Health and Social Care. The role of these External members was to provide subject expertise and judgement of the validity and appropriateness of the programmes under Review.

Input from Service Users and Carers

Service Users and Carers were involved throughout the review. Two service users and carers were on the review Panel. Their role was to help inform the academic members of the panel on service user and carer needs and to lead the Panel in making judgements in this area. The Panel also conducted a number of interviews with (other) service users and carers during the course of the review.

Input from the General Social Care Council

The Panel’s work was informed by the General Social Care Council. A representative appointed by the General Social Care council received all of the papers prepared in
advance for the Review and sent a series of questions in return. These questions were raised by the Panel on the General Social Care Council’s behalf and were addressed by the School in a written response. The response, as well as the Panel’s full report, was shared with the General Social Care Council.

7. Overview of the main characteristics of the programmes covered by the review

The Panel agreed that:

(a) the degree programmes under review are coherent, appropriate in breadth and scope, and draw upon up-to-date scholarship.

(b) teaching is clearly informed by current thinking within the academic discipline and by developments in practice.

(c) the teaching team provides an impressive range of learning opportunities, on campus and in placements.

8. Conclusions on innovation and good practice

The Panel agreed there are many examples of innovation and good practice in both the social work and counselling programmes. The Panel singled out the very successful use of service users and carers throughout the academic life cycle of students on social work programmes. The partnership between service users and carers and academic staff successfully enhances the student learning experience.

The Panel also singled out the ‘Time to Talk’ initiative run by the counselling teaching team. ‘Time to talk’ is a public counselling service operated by the School. Counselling is provided by trainees on the MA/Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling and by some graduates of those courses working under supervision from well qualified and experienced psychotherapists and counsellors. The service offers counselling at affordable rates to potential clients whose needs are not currently met by alternative services in the area and, provides appropriate placements for students on the Diploma.

9. Conclusions on quality and standards

The Review Panel concluded:

(a) that the intended learning outcomes of the programmes were clear and appropriate and were being obtained by students.

(b) that quality and standards were in general being achieved; and

(c) that the programme specifications were being delivered.
10. Conclusions on currency and validity of the programmes under Review

The Panel recommended to the Board for Teaching and Learning of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences the following degree programmes be re-approved to run for a further six years:

- MA/Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling
- BA in Social Work
- BA in Social Work (Employment route)
- BA in Social Work (part-time)

There were no necessary conditions to the re-approval of programmes; however the Panel made the following recommendations:

**Social Work**

the teaching team:

(a) reviews how in the programme literature it articulates links between theory and practice.

(b) reviews programme literature, including programme handbooks and programme specifications, to demonstrate more clearly than is currently the case how assessment regimes allow students to demonstrate learning outcomes.

(c) revises procedures for responding to External Examiners to comply with University-wide regulations. The Panel’s concern was in regards to the practice of multiple correspondence with External Examiners from a number of different members of staff.

(d) adds to assessment schedules equivalent schedules for the return of marked work.

(e) reviews how it informs service users and carers about rates of pay and payment of incidental expenses.

(f) builds on its use of Blackboard in learning and teaching to use Blackboard to foster student engagement especially when away from campus on placement.

**Counselling**

the teaching team:

(a) overhauls programme handbooks, programme specifications and module descriptions to ensure programmes are articulated in a manner consistent with QAA descriptors for Masters-level work.

(b) articulates more fully within the programme literature how anti-discriminatory practice and the BACP ethical framework are embedded within the curriculum.
(c) considers assignment guidelines for all assessed work, including criteria for its marking.

(d) reviews assessment regimes to consider whether some learning outcomes are relatively over-assessed to the detriment of some others that may not be assessed enough.

(e) embeds more critique of the psychodynamic model within the curriculum.

(f) agrees a minimum number of clinical hours in relation to the personal therapy done by students. This is to assist with auditing and the verifying of standards.

(g) does more to articulate its philosophy of assessment, in particular in relations to the links between theory, practice and personal development.

12. Action by the Board for Teaching and Learning of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences

The Board for Teaching and Learning of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences considered the Panel’s report and recommendations at its Spring Term meeting, 2008. It agreed to accept the Panel’s recommendation to re-approve the programmes that had been reviewed for a further 6 years.