

## LTC12D101

**Title:** Proposals relating to a Role Description for Course Directors in the NAM  
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### Issue

Proposals from the Academic Director of Taught Programmes for a new Role Description for Course Directors under the New Academic Model. This paper was considered at TPPG on 13 March 2013. The role description has been through a number of iterations and has been considered by TPPG on three separate occasions during its development. LTQCs have been consulted in its development and there is wide support for the descriptor as a result. The Role Description is intended as an 'empowering' document which provides an enhanced level of clarity about the role of CDs.

### Recommendation

LTC members are asked to consider and formally approve the recommendations contained in the paper.

### Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

### Risk Implications

Many of the recommendations contained will have a 'risk' element for the University in the sense that decisions about policy issues will have an impact on processes and outcomes for students, and the student experience. However, the risks involved in this particular document are minimal.

### Equality and Diversity

It is not envisaged that any of the recommendations contained in the report will impact on groups with protected characteristics.

### Timing of decisions

This paper contains a Role Description for approval by LTC at its 20 March 2013 meeting. They will be implemented as part of the NAM.

### Further Information

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### Background

TPPG is an advisory group which provides guidance and advice to the Academic Director of Taught Programmes on issues relating to UEA policy and teaching/pedagogy in general. TPPG is not a decision-making body and has no executive powers – it is a body with cross-University membership which puts forward recommendations to LTC for the latter to consider and/or approve.

### Discussion

The paper is for discussion and contains recommendations for approval.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Course Directors

(Version 4, 3 March 2013)

At TPPG in Nov 2012 the Group agreed that it was important that there was value in developing a shared understanding within the University with regard to what the role of Course Director entailed. It agreed, therefore, that the Chair should continue efforts to develop a Role Descriptor which could be presented to University LTC for approval before the end of the current academic year.

Feedback from TPPG members was circulated at the Nov meeting. The Chair considered this feedback carefully and drafted a revised Role Description which provided more clarity regarding boundaries and 'overlaps' with other role holders and managers in Schools; in particular Heads of School, Exam Board Chairs, Advisers, Senior Advisers, Director of Admissions and Module Convenors. This reflects the fact that CDs do need to liaise with other post holders whilst respecting appropriate 'boundaries'. The ADTP revised the Description so that it also addressed issues like:

- Liaison with the Library
- Identification of external examiners
- Regular meetings with Module Convenors
- Induction
- Development of Blackboard sites
- Recruitment
- Pastoral care to students/provision of references

The role of the Course Director in respect to Joint Degree courses was clarified, as was the authority of the CD in cases where the CD and Deputy CD disagreed.

Following TPPG on 15 Jan 2013, the ADTP asked Assoc Deans to share with their Faculty LTQCs so School Directors can discuss with CDs in their respective Schools, and feedback concerns/queries to Faculty Associate Deans for T & L. This process of wider consultation has now been completed. The feedback received is summarised overleaf. In the light of this feedback from LTQCs the ADTP has made some additional amendments which include:

- Clustering the bullet points into 'themed' sections (which hopefully will make the document more accessible and easy to read).
- Emphasising that this is an 'enabling' document (rather than a controlling one) intended to empower CDs to explore the full potential of the role and to exercise their responsibilities and authority effectively.
- Clarification regarding the pastoral aspect of the role – emphasising that this is a shared responsibility in which other post holders play a key role (e.g. advisers, senior advisers, module organisers).
- Including reference to role of CD in ensuring that a programme is compliant with PSRB requirements.
- Including reference to role of CD in supporting Course Review and validation processes (where the latter applies, e.g. in FMH)
- Including reference to the role of the CD in liaising and working collaboratively with practice-based colleagues (e.g. practice leads, workplace mentors, practice educators) in organising and overseeing quality of placement opportunities and workplace learning, where the latter is applicable.

- Including need to liaise with School Teaching Director to enhance the quality of the student experience and maximise good honours outputs.

This version of the Role Description is submitted to TPPG for a final 'check' – the intention being that it will be considered for formal approval at University LTC on 20 March 2013.

Dr Adam Longcroft  
Academic Director for Taught Programmes  
3 March 2013

## **Feedback from Faculty LTQCs on Role and Responsibilities of Course Directors**

(Version 4, 3 March 2013)

### **Feedback from FMH:**

- This was very positively greeted and felt to really clarify and value the role.
- There were a number of comments asking if the boundary/responsibilities of the module organiser and CD could be clarified a little more.
- This is a very clear outline, it gives a strong sense of the responsibilities around module cohesion and working practices across the programme, programme ownership is clearly signalled, also the student centred nature shines through nicely too.
- Some clarity around the time allocated for the role is opportune to revisit give some substantial time consuming work within here. Having clarity on that aspect should also be confirmed by the start of the next academic year if that is when this will come into effect.
- It reads as an attractive role which should attract ambitious colleagues and also reward those in positions at present who wish to maximise their ambition, since it makes clear the responsibility for direct influence on the programme and student experience.
- The role of deputy widely supported especially for larger programmes and for succession planning.
- Might be helpful to 'cluster' bullet points into themes.

### **Feedback from SCI:**

One SCI colleague has noted that two of the roles seem 'inappropriately highlighted' for a course director:

- Development of Blackboard sites –in his School blackboard site provision is at the level of modules rather than courses.
- Pastoral care to students/provision of references – it is argued that this seems a standard role for any member of Faculty so highlighting it as a responsibility of the course director is unnecessary. It is suggested that this role should be shared equally across Faculty and we need to avoid a situation where appointment as course director starts to become something of a poisoned chalice in terms of workload. Students should continue to seek references from appropriate members of Faculty- e.g. dissertation supervisors and advisors.

### **Feedback from HUM:**

- Could this sentence 'Responsibilities of the Course Director are...' be changed to 'Responsibilities of the Course Director commonly include' (or something like that). This would be in addition to the 'disclaimer' about variations across School in paragraph 1, which I think is already useful. There are several responsibilities on this list, which in many schools (in HUM at least) fall under the remit of heads of school, teaching directors or chair of exams and I think unnecessary confusion and complaints about this role descriptor could be avoided by making it even clearer than it already is, that there can be variation.
- Could the document make it clearer what the relationship between teaching directors and course directors is? Maybe this could be clarified in paragraph 1. It would be useful for course directors to know to what extent they have to report to teaching directors.
- Could the section on Blackboard be changed so that other, non-VLE related teaching strategies and tools are included? 'Assist module convenors in maintaining an effective Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard) relating to their course and/or the modules within it.' I can see why and how the course director might be well placed to assist module convenors in maintaining an effective learning environment and teaching strategies,

including the VLE. To me, this makes more sense and would suggest that course directors could have a mentoring role which goes beyond VLE related activities.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Course Directors**

(Version 4, Draft for TPPG, 13 March 2013)

The New Academic Model (NAM) places a new emphasis on programme/course level coordination, planning and oversight. This role descriptor sets out the roles and responsibilities that the University will have of Course Directors within the New Academic Model. Whilst this role description seeks to define the role of Course Director in more precise terms, it is not intended to provide a prescriptive list and it should be noted that the precise responsibilities attached to the role may vary in some cases (e.g. in particular schools or in relation to certain professional courses) or may be subject to negotiation with the Head of School concerned. In some schools, for example, the HoS may require the Course Director to oversee the submission of requests for Associate Tutor contracts. In others, the Course Director will have duties that relate to the 'professional' status of the course and PSRB-related processes and requirements. The role will therefore inevitably be subject to some necessary variation but the role description provides what is hoped will be useful guidance with respect to what the role could potentially entail.

The role of the Course Director is an important one within the University and this Role Description is intended to 'empower' Course Directors to explore the full range of opportunities that the role provides to positively influence the enhancement of programmes and the quality of the student experience.

**The responsibilities of the Course Director commonly include those in the list below.**

### **Course leadership and organisation**

- Provide 'academic leadership' of the course in terms of:
  - Curriculum design, revision & the on-going development of the tutor team.
  - Effective delivery of the course concerned, ensuring that the teaching team (and in particular module convenors) are properly briefed, and liaising with DoS, School DLO, and Senior Adviser as necessary.
  - Keeping abreast of developments likely to impact on the course they direct (e.g. changes in UEA policy, Professional Body requirements/constraints, QAA audit etc).
- Identify themselves to students early on in the course and ensure, thereafter, that they become a familiar 'face' to students as the person responsible for the management of the course.
- Encourage student representation on their programmes on School SSLCs and attend, where possible, if asked to do so by SSLC Officer in the School.
- Ensure that the course conforms to the requirements of the New Academic Model.
- Ensure that when they delegate responsibilities to another colleague that the persons responsible are clearly identified.
- Provide information to undergraduate students on aspects of degree structure, options under 'defined choice', etc and provide guidance to LTS on concession requests (e.g. intercalations).
- Assist in provision of information for room bookings and the management of any subsequent changes in room allocations (in liaison with module organisers).
- Liaise, as necessary, with the School Teaching Director to enhance the quality of the student experience and maximise good honours outputs.

### **Induction and student support**

- Assist, as appropriate, in the organisation and delivery of an appropriate induction programme for new students (the Course Director's input is likely to vary according to the programme and school concerned).
- Consider and address (as appropriate) the induction needs of returning students (i.e. those progressing to Year 2/3/4).
- Assist other academic colleagues and role holders in the School (e.g. module organisers, advisers, senior adviser, dissertation supervisors, etc) in providing pastoral support, as and when appropriate, to students on their course.

### **Assessment & feedback**

- Manage marking and moderation allocations and processes.
- Ensure that the assessment strategy is informed by School-level guidance/policy and designed in such a way that it enables students to demonstrate achievement of published course outcomes. The assessment strategy (which includes formative assessments, summative assessments, synoptic assessments, clinical/practical assignments and exams) should be informed by discussions with relevant Module Convenors and Faculty and School priorities with respect to employability.
- Ensure that the feedback strategy is informed by discussions with Module Convenors and by School policy. It should be designed in such a way that it builds student learning, skills and confidence. Course Directors should monitor the quality of feedback provided to students as part of the annual Course Update process.

### **Quality management and enhancement**

- Oversee the annual Course Update process and lead on drafting of Course Review document.
- Attend the relevant Exam Board for their course.
- Assist, as appropriate, in the development of papers/evidence for Course Review purposes.
- Assist the Chair of Examiners, as appropriate, in the process of identifying appropriate external examiners for their course.
- Provide the Director of Teaching & Learning in the School with update course profiles and liaise with the Director of Teaching & Learning in relation to the Module and Course Update process (e.g. if seeking approval for amendments to individual modules or the Course).

### **Effective liaison**

- Assist the Director of Admissions in the School, as appropriate, in the implementation of an effective recruitment strategy for the course.
- Ensure effective leadership on Joint Degree courses. Where the course is a joint degree course, run in partnership with another School of Study, there will be a Course Director from the school which owns the course, and a Deputy Course Director from the other school. The Course Director will meet with the Deputy Course Director at least once per semester in order to ensure that:
  - students on joint courses are being treated consistently by the two Schools concerned.
  - students on joint degree courses are receiving the same level of support as student on single honours courses.

In cases where the Course Director and Deputy Director disagree on an issue, the Course Director in the School which owns the joint degree programme shall have the final say.

- Assist module organisers in maintaining an effective learning environment (including Blackboard) relating to their course and/or the modules within it.

- Liaise with the Faculty Librarian in cases where learning resources are identified which are additional to module requirements.
- Provide relevant information on the course when requested by the Head of School or the School Director of Teaching & Learning.

**PSRB Compliance**

- Ensure that the course is compliant with relevant PSRB requirements.
- Assist in supporting any relevant PSRB-related validation and/or re-validation processes.
- Liaise as necessary with practice-based colleagues\_(e.g. practice leads, workplace mentors, practice educators) in organising and overseeing quality of placement opportunities and workplace learning, where the latter is applicable and/or required by a PSRB.