

**UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW**

**Academic Standards Committee - Friday 20 April 2007**

**Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:  
Report of the Review of Nursing and Health Care held on 5  
December 2006**

**Ms Helen Clegg, Clerk to the Review Panel**

**Review Panel**

Professor Robin Leake (Convener)	Vice Principal, Physical Sciences and Engineering
Mrs Rosalynd Jowett	External Subject Specialist, University of Southampton
Dr Jacqueline Atkinson	Senate Assessor on Court
Professor Jeremy Bagg	Member of Cognate Department (Dental School)
Professor Bob Matthew	Learning and Teaching Centre
Ms Mhairi Wilson	Student Representative
Ms Helen Clegg (Panel Secretary)	Senate Office

**A. Introduction**

Formerly known as the School of Nursing and Midwifery, the Division of Nursing and Health Care is one of nine divisions within the Faculty of Medicine. In recent years, the Division experienced a period of major uncertainty which was only concluded in 2005. In 2003, a proposal was put forward by Glasgow Caledonian University to create a joint Glasgow School of Nursing and Midwifery. Negotiations carried on for two years but in 2005 these were terminated as it became clear that a satisfactory agreement on financial modelling could not be reached. This period of uncertainty affected staff and students, which manifested itself through staff resignations. As a result of the failed merger a full review was undertaken and a report was submitted to the Principal in October 2005, detailing areas for future growth. The Division also changed its name to more accurately reflect its provision, which would no longer encompass Midwifery.

The School, as it was then known, was last reviewed internally during Session 1995-96. A Teaching Quality Assessment of Nursing was undertaken by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) in November 1996, which resulted in a 'Highly Satisfactory' rating. Review Visits from NHS Education for Scotland (NES) take place annually.

The Division had provided a Self Evaluation Report and supporting documentation in accordance with the University's requirements for the Review of Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment. The Convener thanked the Department for the fullness and clarity of the documentation. It was noted that the Self

Evaluation Report had been circulated to undergraduate students for comment. The Department was **commended** on its inclusive approach.

The Review Panel met with Professor David Barlow, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and Mrs Joan McDowell, Head of the Division of Nursing and Health Care. The Panel also met with fifteen key members of staff, two probationary members of staff, nine Practice Education Facilitators and mentors, twelve postgraduate students/graduates and fifteen undergraduate students covering all levels of provision.

The Review Panel considered the following range of provision offered by the Division of Nursing and Health Care:

- BN/BN (Hons) in Adult Nursing
- MSc (MedSci) in Health Care
- Graduate Diploma in Chronic Oedema Management

## **B. Overall Aims of the Division's Provision**

The Review Panel noted and praised the Division's overall aim to "provide leadership in multi-professional health care research, education and practice at a local, national and international level".

The Division's overall aims were communicated to all students through their handbooks, and the Panel considered them to be appropriate, and consistent with the aims of the University as a whole.

The Panel felt that the SER, whilst recognising the difficulties facing the Division, did not always give full credit to the many fine achievements of the Division. The Panel believed there had been a real erosion of confidence as a result of the period of the uncertainty surrounding the proposed merger, from which it had proved difficult to recover. It was apparent that there was a good deal of positivity within the Division but that this needed to be effectively harnessed to bring about tangible results.

The Panel wished to know how the Division distinguished its offerings from those of comparable institutions, and what made it unique. It was noted that it was fairly unusual for Nursing to be located within a Medical faculty, and that this should be used as a positive selling point as it offered many benefits beyond the sharing of teaching and expertise. The Head of Division stated that a positive choice had been made in placing the Division within the Faculty of Medicine, and that not all universities offering both Nursing and Medicine chose to do this. She further stated that a Faculty Student Group existed which encompassed all of the Divisions within the Faculty. Practical problems which had existed were being solved, such as the difficulty Nursing students previously had as regards access to the Wolfson Building. The accessibility now offered to them had educational benefits (e.g. access to textbooks held there) as well as social benefits, and encouraged mixing with medical students. The Head of Division stated that, for the last 18 months, she felt for the first time that the Division had been an equal partner within the Faculty, and that this had been a real boost for the Division after the negativity associated with the proposed GCU collaboration.

The Head of Division added that there was a vibrant research culture within HealthQWest, which offered the Division an excellent opportunity to raise its research profile. Despite heavy teaching loads, most staff were undertaking some research and, through HealthQWest, they had the chance to work with more experienced researchers. She further stated that, although the number of staff in the Division was small, they were fully committed to excellence in teaching, setting high standards for themselves and for the students. She advised that some were recognised as experts in their subject area, with their opinions and advice being sought within the NHS. The Head of

Division took the view that staff were lively, active participants within the Health Board and within Scotland. Joint partnership existed between the University and the NHS, with mutual recognition of worth, and this was demonstrated by the existence of an Honorary Professor who was the Director of Nursing for the Acute Division within the Health Board.

One point raised by the Head of Division, the staff group and the students, was that one of the main strengths of the Division's teaching was its emphasis on the science base of its programmes, particularly the undergraduate degree. It was also believed that students benefited from the research interests within the Division and Faculty, and that having this up-to-date knowledge perhaps explained the tendency of BN graduates to enter the Critical Care field. The Head of Division stated that graduates of the Division were highly regarded and sought after globally. The Universitas 21 collaboration is enabling the Division to achieve worldwide recognition. The PEF/Mentors group reiterated this by stating their view that there was a clear difference between Glasgow students/graduates and those of other institutions. The Panel **recommended** that these main strengths be emphasised in the Division's marketing efforts.

The Panel was pleased to note that, without exception, the students were enthusiastic about their programmes and would not hesitate to recommend the Division to potential applicants. The student groups greatly impressed the Panel with regard to their intelligence, maturity and positive attitudes and the Division was to be **commended** on this.

## **C. Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Provision**

### *C.1 Aims*

The Panel found the programme and course aims to be consistent with relevant benchmark statements, and aligned to professional practice standards, where this was appropriate. The aims were communicated to all students through their inclusion in course handbooks.

### *C.2 Intended Learning Outcomes*

The Panel noted the Intended Learning Outcomes for each programme were provided in the Self Evaluation Report (and were also supplied in Student Handbooks), and was content that these fulfilled the aims of the programmes and met the requirements of the profession. The Panel heard that efforts were made to ensure all stakeholders had a clear understanding of the ILOs and that these formed a key part of the preparation of students, mentors and Practice Education Facilitators.

It was stated in the SER that a consultation process was being undertaken for the Bachelor of Nursing, with students and NHS colleagues, in which it was proposed that one core component and a choice of 4 options would be offered.

Both undergraduate and postgraduate students confirmed that they were familiar with the Intended Learning Outcomes and understood how they applied to assessment methods.

### C.3 *Assessment*

#### C.3.1 Assessment Methods

The assessment methods employed by the Division were wide-ranging, and included a variety of summative and formative methods for academic work and clinical practice. The Division used the University Code of Assessment with no apparent difficulty and was satisfied that mentors were using it effectively.

#### C.3.2 Clinical Assessment

All students were enthusiastic about the value of the clinical placements and enjoyed having the opportunity to see theory being applied in practice. The Mentors advised that it was difficult initially to give failing grades to students, but that they tried to identify poor students at an early stage and, together with the Division, draw up an action plan for the student. However, on four-week placements, it was not always possible to spend large amounts of time with the student in order to identify issues needing to be addressed. With regard to Fitness to Practice issues, these would be referred back to the Division, and were taken seriously.

The undergraduate students noted that experiences of mentoring were varied. It was not uncommon, they advised, for a student to arrive at their placement to find their Mentor was on holiday. It was **recommended** that steps be taken to ensure students have the best possible opportunity to maximise the time spent with their Mentor whilst on placement.

It was noted that the Mentoring training was organised by Glasgow Caledonian University and the students had formed the view that this reflected the learning outcomes of GCU rather than Glasgow and using GCU paperwork. They were concerned that this was detrimentally affecting the grades awarded. The Head of Division assured the Panel that Glasgow University was also involved in Mentor preparation and that she was satisfied that the systems in place were robust and sensitive to student needs.

#### C.3.3 Annual Assessment Day

The Panel noted from the SER that the Division held an annual Assessment Day, at which summative assessment was reviewed and altered taking into account ILOs and student feedback. The Division was to be **commended** on this proactive approach.

#### C.3.4 Feedback

First year students mentioned that they receive a comparatively small amount of feedback, due to the smaller amount of work they are required to hand in for marking. Otherwise, students stated that they received an appropriate amount of good quality feedback and were encouraged to speak to staff if they required further clarification.

#### C.3.5 Honours Dissertation

It was noted that BN Honours students were required to submit a dissertation which took the form of a critical appraisal of existing literature in their area of interest. Due to ethics constraints, it was not feasible for the BN students to conduct original research for the dissertation. This was clearly regrettable, but staff took the view that the process of producing the dissertation was a useful experience for the students. They stated that, in many cases, graduates would only see their careers advance if they continued to further study (specifically to Masters or PhD level) and that the experience

of writing the dissertation would be essential in view of this. In addition, it offered the student the opportunity to explore in depth an area of interest.

The undergraduate students were concerned that, prior to the dissertation, they had little experience of written work. It was stated that some students chose to graduate with the ordinary degree in order to avoid the dissertation requirement. Some suggested it would be helpful to have a certain amount of essay-based assessments in order to develop their written skills. This was beginning to happen in Year 3, but students wished to receive more feedback – particularly in Year 2 when Honours selection was taking place. The Panel **recommended** that the possibility of including several assessed essays into the BN programme be investigated.

#### C.3.6 Plagiarism

It was stated in the SER that the Division had initiated the use of a ‘Declaration of Originality’ form which students were required to submit with each piece of assessed work, in order to deter plagiarism.

### C.4 *Curriculum Design and Content*

#### C.4.1 Change and Sustainability

The Panel voiced some concern that staff members were being spread too thinly and that, in many cases, there was reliance on one or two staff for particular aspects of teaching. They enquired as to whether the Head of Division’s wishes to expand teaching within unique areas was feasible in the light of this. She stated that it depended on the programme and the customer setting in which it was delivered. She advised that, at present, many of the courses offered as part of the postgraduate programmes were delivered by NHS staff, and that mentors were heavily utilised. She further advised that the number of staff delivering specialisms was small and that this did not interfere with their usual teaching load.

The staff group generally supported the Head of Division’s wish to expand specialised teaching, but took the view that additional staff resources (including support) would have to be in place before this strategy could be developed. They were acutely aware of professional requirements and stressed that any programmes they might offer had to be credible as well as competitive.

It was noted that, when the review of provision was being undertaken after the GCU collaboration fell through, the possibility of offering postgraduate provision only had been considered. The Head of Division explained that this would not have been appropriate. She stated that the goodwill of the NHS was important to the Division and that this would have been eroded had the Division discontinued the Bachelor of Nursing programme. In addition, the quality of BN graduates was seen to be very high and this enhanced the reputation of the Division and the University.

#### C.4.2 Sector-Led Provision

The Head of Division stated that, ideally, she would wish the Division to provide postgraduate programmes only in its areas of expertise, particularly where this gave an opportunity to be the sole provider of teaching in unique areas as demanded by the sector. It was hoped this strategy could lead to significant expansion within the Division. However, in addition to difficulties in approving programmes quickly (see C.4.4), it was noted that there were also constraints on, for example, allowing staff to be seconded to work on any NHS initiatives due to lack of cover within the Division. The Head of Division was aware that NES had plans to develop a masters degree for

chaplains and that, with the Theology and Religious Studies department here at Glasgow, this was a possible area for involvement.

Students on the Diploma in Chronic Oedema Management spoke very positively about the programme and their experiences. It was clear to them that the programme had been introduced in response to market forces and that there was a desperate need for practitioners in this area. It was very clear to them what they were there to achieve, and they saw a distinct difference in the level of the programme as compared to an undergraduate programme. It was noted that, as oedema management was a small professional area, it was likely that any person working in that field would be in charge of making clinical decisions and therefore must be accredited at a specialist level. They also stated that some doctors sought training in the field and that the students' postgraduate training equipped them well to provide this.

Students on the MSc (MedSci) in Health Care were also very positive. They stated that the programme was an ideal stepping stone for their career progression, and that it gave them additional confidence to voice patient concerns in a research-based context. They believed the integration of students from various areas of health care was particularly valuable as it allowed different perspectives to be considered.

#### C.4.3 Research-Led Teaching

It was noted that student projects were often based on the research interests of staff members.

However, the undergraduate student group commented that some members of staff had not been in practice for such lengthy periods of time that they seemed to be no longer familiar with current clinical practices, and therefore some of what had been taught was no longer relevant. It was **recommended** that steps be taken to ensure all members of staff were familiar with current practice as well as current research activity.

#### C.4.4 Review of Provision

Although provision was regularly reviewed and necessary action taken, the Head of Division believed it was not possible to be as responsive as she would like, due to the constraints of the University's scrutiny and approval procedures. She stated that this sometimes led to opportunities being missed as new programmes could not be set up in time. However, it was acknowledged that the situation was likely to be similar in all HEIs competing to offer new programmes in response to sector demand.

It was noted that the Diploma in Chronic Oedema Management was being proposed for an upgrade to Masters level, a move the Panel agreed was highly appropriate.

The undergraduate students voiced the opinion that there was too much emphasis on communication skills and that they would prefer more science-based subjects. When the Panel raised this with the Head of Division, she stated that the development of excellent communication skills was a crucial factor in the training of nurses, and stated her belief that the balance between this and the science element of the programme was optimal.

### C.5 *Student Recruitment, Support and Progression*

#### C.5.1 Recruitment

The Panel noted from the SER that, although there were 5 applicants per place for the Bachelor of Nursing degree, the Division struggled to meet its recruitment target due to the requirement for Higher Chemistry, or Biology or Human Biology together with

Standard Chemistry at level 1/2. A Chemistry summer school was available and this was widely publicised at Open Days and on the Division's website.

Although applications from international students were always welcomed, they could often not be accepted due to the inconsistency of overseas first degrees and UK first degrees. However, the Head of Division was keen to encourage overseas applications and advised that, for the first time, there had been a number of enquiries from the USA this year. There was also a trip planned to discuss possible collaboration with a Chinese university. The staff group agreed that international applications should be encouraged, and confirmed that some work had been done in relation to the Division's website in order to improve searchability. However, it was recognised that international students required different types of support and thought would have to be given to the best ways of providing this within already stretched resources.

At present, the Division had one member of academic staff in the role of Admissions Officer, which was only one part of her remit. As she was due to retire shortly, there was concern over how this gap would be filled. It was also noted that there was no central support provided to this role. The Panel **recommended** that priority be given to filling this role as a matter of urgency, and to securing the necessary administrative support.

The Division had undertaken research into the reasons for student withdrawal, and found that the main influencing factors were finance, making the wrong career choice, difficulty in adapting to the new environment, and homesickness. The Division's recruitment strategy was influenced by this. It was noted that financial difficulties were of particular importance, as the 47-week academic year made it largely impossible for students to support themselves through employment.

The Panel wished to explore the issue of SFC funded places, and enquired as to whether the number currently available was appropriate. The Head of Division took the view that more funded places, for both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, would be welcomed. However, she stated that, although there were 5 applicants for each undergraduate place, it was not always easy to convert these to accepted offers. This was made even more difficult if University of Glasgow was not the applicants' first choice.

The Division took part in the usual recruitment activities such as Open Days and the distribution of marketing literature. This year (2006/2007), a flyer with photographs and quotes from current students will also be used, and the Head of Division believed this had been successful as applicants found it easy to identify with the students.

The change in the name of the Division had assisted in diverting enquiries relating to midwifery, and the addition of 'Health Care' reinforced the multi-professional nature of provision, particularly at postgraduate level, where not only nurses were recruited. The Head of Division stated that recruitment had not been adversely affected by the name change, but that it was too early to speculate on whether there had been any positive impact.

It was noted that the Division did not offer an accelerated degree. A number of the BN students already had first degrees in related subjects but could not gain advanced entry with these. When asked, the students confirmed that they came to Glasgow despite this because they considered the programme to be the best available. However, they would have been very keen for an accelerated degree to have been available, in particular due to the financial implications. The Head of Division advised that this was offered by two Scottish institutions, and that she was aware of the difficulty they experienced in recruiting sufficient numbers of students. She also advised there may be difficulties with regard to the legislative requirement for 4600 study hours on the BN programme, although there were opportunities for a certain amount of leeway. It was

**recommended** that the Division make initial investigations into the feasibility of offering advanced entry/acceleration, bearing in mind the potential obstacles.

### C.5.2 Student Support

The Division stated in the SER that it believed retention could be improved if students were enabled to support each other informally. An email support system had been implemented, manned by 4<sup>th</sup> year students. The annual McGirr lecture was also set up, which was compulsory for all BN students. It gave students an opportunity to share information and included an informal reception. Attempts had been made by the Division to implement a 'buddy' system, but this had proved very labour intensive and, as not all students participated, had not worked as well as had been hoped. The student group also re-established the Glasgow University Nurses Society in order to foster a sense of identity with the University and the profession. Individual Graduation Balls had also been replaced with one Divisional Ball which all students, not just those graduating, can attend. The Division believed all of these initiatives helped to create a culture of inclusion and support. Both student groups agreed that there was a very definite feeling of support both from the staff and from the student body, and that communications were excellent. The Panel **commended** the Division on encouraging this supportive environment.

In common with other University departments, the Division employed an Adviser of Studies system, as well as encouraging informal discussions with staff when problems arose. Staff believed this system worked well, particularly the informal approach. In addition, Mentors were available to support students in their clinical work and students had the opportunity to give feedback on the effectiveness of the mentoring system. Both student groups were happy with these systems, and particularly tended to make use of informal communication channels. Most found the course leaders to be very approachable and it was noted that students tended to approach the course leader rather than their assigned Adviser of Studies. Students seemed to take the view that it was their own responsibility to seek contact with their Adviser. The Panel **recommended** that the Division clarify the role of the Adviser of Studies and make clear the responsibilities of the Adviser and the student, in line with standard University procedure.

There was some debate regarding the role of the students' Supervisor for the clinical placements. Although it was believed the Supervisor was responsible for visiting the student at the placement hospital, several students stated that this had not happened, or that the Supervisor had not checked the students' availability with regard to their shifts, and had visited at an unsuitable time. There seemed to be some confusion surrounding the co-ordination of placement visits. The Panel **recommended** that a clear protocol be devised and communicated to the students with regard to the role of the Supervisor and the arrangement of visits, in order to alleviate any confusion.

### C.5.3 Progression

It was stated in the SER that, if students were going to fail, it would normally happen in the first year of the programme, and occasionally the second year.

In order to motivate Degree students to perform well, despite their lack of progression to Honours, the Division set up a prize for the best academic student in Year 3.

The staff group advised that the BN placements were often a deciding factor for students considering leaving the programme, particularly where student expectations had been unrealistic. It was noted that the issue of retention was of concern nationally and by no means unique to Glasgow.



## C.6 *The Effectiveness of Provision*

The Division offered evidence of the effectiveness of its provision, by means of External Examiners' comments, NES visit documentation and student feedback.

### C.6.1 Teaching Methods

The Panel noted that the Division employed a wide variety of teaching methods, including lectures, seminars, debates, project work, group work and clinical practice. They were encouraged to hear that the Division placed great importance on the significance of constructive comments made by External Examiners and that a number of suggestions made had been implemented (e.g., by encouraging more focused learning in the BN through the research material presented; by restructuring the Human Disease course to improve attendance and allow focused study time).

Clinical placements were a key part of the students' learning experience and comments on these were generally positive. Due to the co-ordination of placements being undertaken by Glasgow Caledonian University, there was a vague concern that GCU students were offered more favourable placements, although students conceded there was no real evidence to support this idea and Head of Division confirmed that this was certainly not the case. There were also comments that, in some cases, the placement was exposing examples of very poor practice within the sector and this was discouraging, demotivating and sometimes emotionally upsetting for students. The staff group agreed this was sometimes the case, particularly in nursing home placements, but that it was unfortunately the reality of nursing that poor practice existed. Any complaints about unsuitable placements were investigated and the appropriate action taken – occasionally removing the student from the placement and offering an alternative. The Placements Approval Group also fed back information on placement experiences to the NHS. However, the undergraduate students firmly believed that Year 1 was not the most appropriate slot for the Care for the Elderly placement, as they did not consider that they were, at that stage, sufficiently prepared emotionally to deal with confused elderly patients. They believed this was one of the main reasons for withdrawal from the programme in Year 1. The Panel **recommended** that consideration be given to the possibility of reorganising the order of placements to ensure the Care for the Elderly placement was offered later in the programme.

Team teaching was used to an extent, for instance, in clinical skills and the inter-professional module of the BN degree, but it was stated in the SER that resources restricted any expansion of this at present.

It was noted that tutorial groups did not exist at present. The undergraduate students raised this as an issue and stated their belief that this had been previously due to the small number of students on the programme. However, they believed that numbers were now sufficiently large that it would be advisable to make use of tutorial groups. The Panel **recommended** that consideration be given to the implementation of a tutorials system.

### C.6.2 Moodle

The undergraduate student group advised that lecture notes were normally available on Moodle. However, as they were not usually provided until after the lecture had taken place, this appeared not to have a detrimental effect on attendance. In addition, students stated that they would attend lectures regardless of the availability of web notes, as it was easier to understand the material when accompanied by the examples and supplementary information referred to in the lectures.

### C.6.3 Teaching Accommodation

It was stated in the SER that, during their first year, BN students were located within the Divisional building for their classes in order to easily locate staff and foster a sense of identity within the Division. However, in subsequent years, most teaching took place outwith the Division and it was believed that this may have a negative impact. This problem was partially addressed by the use of a student Common Room, but this was considered to be too small for its purpose.

The student groups stated that the accommodation was generally acceptable, but that rooms outside of the Division building were not always appropriate for the style of teaching. However, they did not always feel welcome in the Wolfson building, believing that this was still considered to be the domain of medical students. The Panel **recommended** that discussions be initiated within the Medical Faculty in order to ensure Nursing students were afforded the same rights of access and support within the Wolfson building as medical students.

### C.6.4 Reliance on Key Staff

The Panel expressed concern that responsibility for a significant amount of teaching rested with specific staff, and that this could cause difficulty should those staff leave or retire. It was noted that this had already happened with regard to certain courses which had had to be withdrawn as a result, and that the member of staff currently solely responsible for admissions was due to retire, leaving a considerable gap. The Head of Division was conscious of this. The Panel strongly **recommended** that careful succession plans needed to be in place for core courses, whilst recognising that some specialist courses may end when a particular member of staff left.

The Chronic Oedema Management students were very conscious that the provision of the programme was largely reliant on one member of staff and had concerns about the continuation of this crucial programme should that member of staff leave the University.

It was also noted that, due to the tendency of students to approach Course Leaders for assistance, rather than their Adviser of Studies, this put considerable pressure on certain staff who, as a result, dealt with the whole year group rather than only those students assigned to him/her. The staff group recognised this, an issue common to many courses across the University, and stated that, on balance, the most important issue was the well-being of the students, although additional support from other sources would be welcomed.

### C.6.5 Mentoring System/Practice Education Facilitators

The Panel was keen to explore the roles and responsibilities of the Mentors and PEFs.

The Mentors undertook mentorship courses which ran for two days, with an update session every few years. They took part in the assessment of students and were provided with the necessary paperwork through the PEFs links with the University.

The group also had links with other universities, but stated that they felt most comfortable with the Glasgow arrangement, perhaps because the Division was smaller. They particularly appreciated the friendly, informal communication channels.

The Panel wished to know how the Mentors dealt with difficult student situations. They advised that, if the matter was straightforward, they would deal with it directly. However, they were aware of the support available within the Division and, in their experience, staff from the Division had been very supportive to the Mentors and

offered a good deal of reassurance. The University would also be contacted if there were problems with student attendance or performance.

The PEFs advised that they were involved in Curriculum Review meetings and that their opinions were valued. However, they had only begun to feel this had happened fairly recently and, although it had been a slow process, it was improving steadily. As they became more familiar with the Division and with their roles, they were included more and felt more comfortable speaking to the students. Some of the PEFs had aspirations to move into teaching and many were undertaking PGCE programmes at present. It appeared there was no clear career structure for the PEFs to follow within the NHS.

The student groups stated that they found the Mentors to be approachable and helpful, although there were sometimes difficulties in spending a lot of time with their Mentor due to conflicting shift patterns.

#### C.6.6 Administrative and Secretarial Support

It was stated in the SER that, since the loss of the Divisional Administrator, no replacement had been appointed and that this had had a significant impact on the smooth running of the Division. However, it was reported by the Head of Division that an administrator had been appointed in the last few weeks. It was now agreed within the Division that three full-time secretaries were needed, and that work would be undertaken shortly to examine the various duties in the remit of each member of support staff, in order to have a clearer picture of what was required.

The staff group agreed that sufficient administrative and secretarial support had not been available for some time and that this placed more of the burden onto themselves. It was stated that it was difficult to respond to the large number of postgraduate queries with only part time support. The Panel **recommended** that the new administrator arrange a meeting with the other support staff and representative members of the teaching staff to determine if support activities could be done more efficiently and if any activities could be discontinued.

#### C.6.7 Use of External Lecturers

The Panel was keen to hear how well the Division's use of external lecturers operated. External experts were used in order to enhance the student learning experience, particularly in the light of staff shortages within the Division. It was acknowledged that this presented challenges in terms of ensuring the consistency of standards, but that the Division were working towards redressing the balance during session 2006-07.

The student groups confirmed that the lectures given by external specialists were excellent, but were disappointed that there were so many cancellations. Although the students understood the reasons, and many were rescheduled, this was considered to be rather disruptive.

#### C.6.8 Staff Development and Support

It was noted that all staff underwent Performance and Development Review on an annual basis, and individual objectives were set in the context of Divisional and personal needs.

The staff group advised that they were not aware of any Staff Development policy within the Division. Some had taken sabbaticals and some had developed PhD plans some time ago, but these had been abandoned during the period of uncertainty

surrounding the proposed GCU collaboration. They stated that any suggestions or ideas they raised were very much restricted by staff capacity issues.

The Probationary Lecturers had attended the Learning and Teaching Service for two years and had been able to share experiences, which had been valuable. They stated that their main difficulty had been hectic workloads and that, after discussion with the Head of Division, this had eased, although it had been a lengthy process. There had also been difficulties with their mentoring and these had been dealt with by a change of mentor. They stated that, due to their workloads, there had been no opportunity for research and that the pressure to successfully complete the probation period meant that research had to be put on hold. Although there had been discussion about protected research time, other commitments had made this impossible. A 'Research Week' had been arranged but, as Year 4 students had still been in the University, research time could not be given priority. The Panel **recommended** that more emphasis be placed on the importance of dedicated research time.

Consideration was being given to enhancing the research profile of staff by encouraging PhD study within the staff group. This was of particular importance in the light of the Division's wish to offer Doctorate provision at some stage in the future as, at present, there were not sufficient numbers of staff in a position to offer PhD supervision. The Head of Division was keen to encourage this although it was recognised that there were problems regarding resources for staff support and cover. She also stated that there may be limited support amongst staff for such development as, at present, there was little or no recognition for these qualifications within the profession. However, ideally, she would be keen for around 80% of staff to eventually undertake PhD study. Staff found this idea encouraging though recognised that, for resource reasons, it would not be straightforward. There was support for offering doctorate-level provision at some point in the future, when the Division was equipped to do so, recognising the need to provide two supervisors for each student.

Staff stated that there was a high level of comradeship amongst colleagues and that there was a firm focus on the student. Communication was informal and friendly and there was a sense of inclusion in the nursing community. This, in conjunction with the interprofessional nature of the teaching and the diverse opportunities, was given as the main reason staff chose to work in the Division.

#### **D. The Maintenance and Enhancement of Standards of Awards**

The Panel was confident that the Division was operating effective measures to maintain the standards of its awards. The SER indicated that standards were maintained using a number of methods, including moderation of examination papers and marks by External Examiners, external scrutiny by NES, and the application of the various University Codes of Practice. External Examiners also played a key role in ensuring comparability with standards and practice in other institutions. The Annual Course Monitoring process also provided an opportunity to identify relevant issues and act upon them.

The Head of Division advised that the Division was a member of HealthQWest, a research consortium of six HEIs in the West of Scotland and associated Health Boards. Staff contributed to books and wrote papers and this provided them with a research profile the Head of Division believed would continue to grow in strength. In turn this would enhance the student experience.

## **E. The Maintenance and Assurance of Quality**

The Division had last been reviewed internally during Session 1995-96, as the School of Nursing and Midwifery. A Teaching Quality Assessment of Nursing was undertaken by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) in November 1996, which resulted in a 'Highly Satisfactory' rating. Review Visits from NHS Education for Scotland (NES) also took place annually.

### *E.1 Quality Assurance Methods*

A variety of measures were in place with regard to quality assurance – these included training and mentoring for new lecturers, student feedback questionnaires, the committee structure within the Division and the Faculty, and the regular review of courses and programmes, with input from representatives from the profession.

### *E.2 Mechanisms for Student Input*

The main method used by students to offer their input was through the use of feedback questionnaires completed at the end of each course. Class representatives could also take any matters of concern to the Staff Student Liaison Committee.

The postgraduate student groups were very satisfied with the action taken on feedback they provided, and stated that this was taken on board and changes made as a result. This made them more inclined to speak up when they encountered difficulties. Undergraduate students made similar comments and stated that they could see their suggestions being implemented from year to year.

The Head of Division advised that guidelines were given to staff regarding the provision of feedback by students. There had been a move towards the use of focus groups, whereby students were asked to identify three positive and three negative aspects of their experience. Each group then had to achieve consensus with the other groups. In many cases it was possible for the member of staff facilitating the session to give immediate feedback.

## **F. Enhancing the Student Learning Experience**

### *F.1 Engagement with senior students*

It was noted from the SER, and from the meetings with students, that in some cases 4<sup>th</sup> year students were assisting 1<sup>st</sup> year students in their learning of clinical skills. This system was clearly popular with students and appeared to foster good relationships throughout the student body as well as giving an informal means of support to 1<sup>st</sup> year students. The Division was to be **commended** on this initiative.

### *F.2 Study Opportunities Abroad/Elsewhere in the UK*

It was stated by the Head of Division that international partners were being explored through Universitas 21. However, at present, no student exchange systems were in place. Three undergraduate students had undertaken study abroad last year but were required to use their annual leave in order to accommodate this and the experience could not be used towards their BN programme. The Head of Division stated that a trip to China was planned for the near future, with hopes of discussing possible collaborative activity. The staff group welcomed ideas for overseas collaboration but took the view that additional staff resources were essential if any development were to

take place. It was **recommended** that opportunities for exchange schemes, including those within England or Wales, be examined.

Although an exchange agreement existed with the University of Edinburgh, it was noted that very few Glasgow students took advantage of this. Please note: This exchange agreement was for postgraduate MSc (Med Sci) in Health Care students only – it was not for undergraduate students. A statement had been received from one student who had participated in the arrangement in 2004, who stated that there had been difficulties in accessing University of Edinburgh facilities initially, and that the travelling had been inconvenient and costly. She stated that she would have preferred the arrangement to have been made with the Public Health Department at Glasgow. The Panel understood that the future of the Edinburgh agreement was uncertain, and may not continue to be offered in future years.

## **G. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas to be Improved or Enhanced in Relation to Learning and Teaching**

### *G.1 Key Strengths*

- The Division demonstrated a cohesive, consultative approach and all staff showed an extremely strong commitment to the success of the Division and its students, despite the uncertainty and change it had experienced
- The student groups were a credit to the Division with regard to their intelligence, maturity and positive attitudes
- The strong science base of the programmes, particularly the BN, was considered to be a crucial factor in the Division's popularity
- A proactive approach was taken to the review of the programmes, the component courses and means of assessment
- Students agreed that there was a very definite feeling of support both from the staff and from the student body, and that communications were excellent
- The system of utilising 4<sup>th</sup> year students to assist 1<sup>st</sup> year students in clinical skills was an excellent initiative

### *G.2 Areas to be Improved or Enhanced*

- Certain staff roles required clarification, as students' expectations were unclear
- Emphasis needed to be placed on the need for staff to be allowed a certain amount of time for research activity
- Contingency plans were required to allow for the possibility of key staff departures
- The Division's research profile should continue to have key importance, and should continue to be enhanced
- The roles of support staff needed urgent review

## H. Conclusions and Recommendations

### H.1 Conclusions

The Panel concluded that the Division's provision was of a high quality overall, and this was particularly impressive given the uncertain conditions under which it had been operating. The Panel was pleased that, without exception, staff and students were committed to the success of the Division and were positive about its future.

### H.2 Recommendations

The recommendations interspersed in the preceding report, and summarised below, are made in the spirit of encouragement in order to enhance the already high standards of the Division of Nursing and Health Care. The recommendations have been cross-referenced to the corresponding sections of the report, and are ranked in order of priority.

#### *Recommendation 1:*

The Panel strongly **recommended** that careful succession plans needed to be in place for core courses, whilst recognising that some specialist courses may end when a particular member of staff left (*Section C.6.4*)

**Attention: Head of Division**

#### *Recommendation 2:*

The Panel **recommended** that priority be given to considering how to fill the Admissions Officer role as a matter of urgency, and to securing the necessary administrative support, prior to the departure of the current post-holder, in order to ensure the admissions process could continue to run effectively (*Section C.5.1*)

**Attention: Head of Division**

#### *Recommendation 3:*

The Panel **recommended** that steps be taken to ensure students have the best possible opportunity to maximise the time spent with their Mentor whilst on placement, in order to achieve the optimum benefit from the placement period (*Section C.3.2*)

**Attention: Head of Division**

#### *Recommendation 4:*

The Panel **recommended** that consideration be given to the possibility of reorganising the order of placements to enable the Care for the Elderly placement to be offered later in the programme, particularly in the light of student statements that this, being the first placement experienced in the programme, was having an impact on student withdrawals (*Section C.6.1*)

**Attention: Head of Division**

#### *Recommendation 5:*

The Panel **recommended** that more emphasis be placed on the importance of dedicated research time, and on ensuring this was borne out in practice. This was of particular

importance in the light of the Division's intention to increase the number of staff with Doctorate-level qualifications (*Section C.6.8*)

**Attention: Head of Division**

*Recommendation 6:*

The Panel **recommended** that the Division clarify the role of the Adviser of Studies and make clear the responsibilities of the Adviser and the student, in line with standard University procedure, in order to alleviate any student confusion and to balance out the workloads of staff (*Section C.5.2*)

**Attention: Head of Division**

*Recommendation 7:*

The Panel **recommended** that the new administrator arrange a meeting with the other support staff and representative members of the teaching staff to determine if support activities could be done more efficiently and if any activities could be discontinued (*Section C 6.6.*)

**Attention: Head of Division/Administrator**

*Recommendation 8:*

The Panel **recommended** that a clear protocol be devised and communicated to the students with regard to the role of the Placement Supervisor and the arrangement of visits, in order to alleviate any student confusion and to ensure there is a clear communication channel available for students requiring assistance whilst on placement (*Section C.5.2*)

**Attention: Head of Division**

*Recommendation 9:*

The Panel **recommended** that the possibility of including several assessed essays into the BN programme be investigated, to ensure that students are sufficiently prepared for the Honours dissertation requirement (*Section C.3.5*)

**Attention: Head of Division**

*Recommendation 10:*

The Panel **recommended** that steps be taken to ensure all members of staff were familiar with current clinical practice as well as current research activity, and did not spend time teaching practices which were no longer in practical use (*Section C.4.3*)

**Attention: Head of Division**

*Recommendation 11:*

The Panel **recommended** that consideration be given to the implementation of a tutorials system now that student numbers had increased to the point where this would be beneficial to students (*Section C.6.1*)

**Attention: Head of Division**



*Recommendation 12:*

The Panel **recommended** that discussions be initiated within the Medical Faculty in order to ensure Nursing students were afforded the same rights of access and support within the Wolfson building as medical students (*Section C.6.3*)

**Attention: Head of Division; Dean of Faculty**

*Recommendation 13:*

It was **recommended** that the Division make initial investigations into the feasibility of offering advanced entry/acceleration, bearing in mind the potential obstacles and competition (*Section C.5.1*)

**Attention: Head of Division; Dean of Faculty**

*Recommendation 14:*

The Panel **recommended** that efforts be made to emphasise the Division's main strengths in its marketing efforts, particularly concentrating on the employability and distinctiveness of its graduates and on the strong scientific base of the BN degree (*Section B*)

**Attention: Head of Division**

*Recommendation 15:*

The Panel **recommended** that opportunities for exchange schemes, including those within England or Wales, be examined (*Section F.3*)

**Attention: Head of Division**

*Prepared by: Janet Fleming, Senate Office*

*Last modified on: Monday 2 April 2007*