

Proposal and Business case – Faculty of Human and Digital Sciences

Despite some areas of growth, there are areas of educational provision in the faculty where recent years have seen low student numbers. Where student numbers are low there are inevitable concerns over the affordability of that provision. Affordability here is determined by the number of teaching staff primarily employed to teach in that area set against the number of students registered. In addition, the faculty has set about making changes to how we deliver courses in our portfolio meaning that potentially we will need fewer academic staff to deliver our portfolio of courses. In summary, and with regret, I propose reducing academic staffing in the faculty by 5 posts. I do so to ensure that the faculty is able to help the university remain financially sustainable to meet our longer-term strategic objectives.

It is inevitable that any potential reduction in staffing should be focused in areas of the faculty where the inequalities in staff-to-student ratios are most striking and where there are significant concerns over affordability. These are the areas of Health Science and Sports Science within the School of Health and Sports Science and Geography and Environmental Science with the School of Computer Science and the Environment. I propose losing 3 posts in Health Science, 1 post in Sports Science, and 1 post within Geography and Environmental Science.

In reaching these decisions, I make the following specific observations.

1. The single honours programme in food and nutritional sciences recruits very low numbers and should be stopped such that the future focus is on the teaching of food and nutrition in combination with other subjects. There is evidence that the teaching of food and nutrition is attractive when delivered in combination with other subjects.
2. There is evidence that the skill set required to support general health teaching is widespread across the School of Health and Sports Science meaning that the justification for a professional tutor post in this area is diminished by low student numbers.
3. The future teaching of subjects within Sports Science can be delivered with greater efficiency than in the past through the increased sharing of provision.
4. The future undergraduate portfolio of Environment provision is already the subject of a paper being prepared by the Head of School outlining how it will be revised and rationalised into BA/BSc Geography. This change will increase the resilience of the delivery of the portfolio.

I now make some specific proposals that affect those areas identified above.

1. Health Science: A mapping exercise where existing staff were mapped to areas of expertise within Health Science showed Biology to have 2 posts, Nutrition to have 4 posts and 1 post is associated with more General Health teaching. To

reduce staffing in Nutrition, I propose losing a Grade 7 and a Grade 8 post. To reduce staffing in General Health I propose losing the Grade 7 professional tutor post. Critical in making the decision of which post will be lost will be ensuring the right mix of expertise and skill is available for the School moving forwards, and that colleagues are judged against the expectations of their current roles.

2. Sports Science: A mapping exercise where the 11.5 existing staff were mapped to varying areas of expertise. However, custom and practice within the team has been that colleagues work across areas and so I have considered all posts together when determining where a post might be lost. As such, I propose 1 post will be lost from teaching and research colleagues from Grade 8. Critical in making the decision of which post will be lost will be ensuring the right mix of expertise and skill is available for the School moving forwards, and that colleagues are judged against the expectations of their current roles.
3. Geography: A mapping exercise where 7 staff were mapped to disciplines within the Environment showed 3 posts in Geography, 2 posts in Environmental Science and 2 posts in Tourism. However, custom and practice within the team has been that colleagues work across areas and so I have considered all posts together. Further analysis of these posts shows the teaching team to contain two Grade 9s, with one being the Head of School. Following a review of the current structure within the teaching team I have reached the view that the work in this area no longer requires the continuation of two Grade 9 posts. Whilst there are currently two staff members at this grade, the proposal is based on a need to improve affordability and operational efficiency. Taking into account the balance of skills available, I am proposing a reduction of one Grade 9 post within this area.

In all cases, consideration has been, and will continue to be given to, retaining, the appropriate mix of skills and experience within the university to meet (1) our future teaching needs, (2) our research aspirations, and (3) the need to ensure the running of school, faculty and university.

Professor [Nick Donnelly](#)

Faculty of Human & Digital Sciences Management Structure

