

A Summary of Stakeholder Views on Development of a pan-European Masters Programme

This is a summary report on the initial stakeholder consultations facilitated by Posadem partners. The aim at this stage was to establish the perceived value of the proposed Masters programme and explore issues pertaining to delivery, content and successful implementation. A copy of the interview schedule can be seen in Appendix A.

Partners adopted different approaches to the consultation process although in the main the approach taken was qualitative. This report will comment on the key issues to emerge from these consultations but it should be noted that this is a summary report and not a thematic analysis.

For more detail on the issues raised by stakeholders please see Appendix B. Copies of the summary reports from each university partner can be seen in Appendices C- H.

Table 1 below provides detail of the type and number of consultations facilitated by each partner.

Table 1 - Consultation Type

| Partner University | Consultation Type | Number | Number of participants |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| DCU | Focus group | 1 | 9 |
| Maastricht | Face to face Interviews | 5 | 6 |
| Salford | Telephone Interviews | 2 | 2 |
| Carinthian | Online survey | 1 | 13 |
| BU | Questionnaire | 1 | 6 |
| SUAS | Face to face interview | 1 | 1 |

A total of ten consultations took place: one focus group, 6 face to face interviews, one online survey, one questionnaire and one telephone interview. Although a range of consultation methods were used by partners, the questions were guided by the initial interview schedule, developed by DCU and BU (Appendix A)

A total of 37 stakeholders took part in the initial consultations. The following types of stakeholders were represented: Clinicians, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, University staff, Nurses, Architects, Social Workers, Training and development staff, Government representatives, Campaigning/Charity representatives. For full details please see table 2 below.

Table 2 - Stakeholder details

| Partner University | Stakeholder Organisation | Individual Role |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Dublin City University | Department of Health | Principal Officer |
| | Centre for Excellence in Universal Design | Architect |
| | Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists | President |
| | Occupational Therapy, Health science Faculty, Trinity College | Assistant Professor |
| | Alzheimer Society of Ireland | Training Officer |
| | | Home Care Coordinator |
| | Nursing Homes Ireland | Practice Development Facilitator |
| | Health Service Executive | Project Manager, National Dementia Education Programme |
| Louth County Council | Age Friendly Project Officer | |
| Maastricht University (UM) | Dept. of Cognitive Neuropsychiatry & Clinical Neuroscience, UM | Assistant Professor x 2 |
| | Dept. of Educational Development & Research, UM | Assistant Professor |
| | Dept. of Health Service Research, UM | Assistant Professor x 2 |
| | School of Business & Economics, UM | Manager |
| Salford University | Alzheimer's Society UK | Education Lead |
| | Care Home | Dementia lead |
| Carinthia University | Nursing home | Nursing management |
| | Mobile nursing service | Manager |
| | Self-employed | Business manager |
| | Geriatric center Wienerwald | Department head |
| | University of Applied Sciences | Quality Management |
| | Self-employed | Clinical Coordinator |
| | IFF-Palliative Care und OrganisationsEthik | Assoc. Prof. |
| | Alps-Adria-University Klagenfurt | Research assistant |
| | Communal service | Communal service employee |
| | NPO | Head of department for the support of caring relatives |
| | Project "Training handbook to promote mental fitness for elderly" | Project manager |
| | Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, Vienna | Researcher |
| | Retired participant | |
| Bournemouth University | Hospital | Geriatric Consultant |
| | Nursing | Community Mental Health Nurse |
| | Local Council | Learning and development officer for older people |
| | Health Centre | GP |
| Saimaa University | Social Services | Social Worker |
| | To be completed | |

The Benefits of a pan European programme

When considering the development of a pan- European Masters Programme in Dementia, stakeholders were generally convinced of the merits of such a programme. It was felt that this would continue to draw attention to dementia and stakeholders highlighted the benefits of an international multi disciplinary approach, suggesting that the programme would address a gap in dementia education and training within the EU market and a gap in dementia expertise in general. The exchange of experience, knowledge, and examples of best practice was regarded as valuable, and a step towards creating more consistent standards in dementia care. Most stakeholders felt that a pan European approach would add value to the programme but that national issues should also be addressed.

There were concerns raised about the cost of the programme to students and the difficulties working students might have in getting time off to attend. Language and cultural difference were mentioned as potentially problematic, as were the different legal and organizational requirements within differing countries. Stakeholders also raised concerns about the potential exclusion of experienced staff without academic qualifications

Student Target Group

In considering the student target group of the programme, a wide variety of professions were listed. However the emphasis remained on health and social care professionals. Some stakeholders also suggested that people with dementia and carers should be able to access the course. A number of stakeholders highlighted the need to clearly identify the target market and cautioned against targeting too wide a group. When it came to the numbers stakeholders envisaged for the programme, the most frequent suggestions ranged from 15 – 30 per group with the potential to run a number of groups simultaneously.

Programme Delivery

In relation to delivery of the programme, stakeholders were generally supportive of a blended learning style with an emphasis on meeting people early in the programme and providing good technical support. While some suggested face to face meetings may not be absolutely necessary, all were convinced that this type of interaction would add value. Some stakeholders supported the option for elective modules and MOOC courses. Others cautioned against an OU cherry picking approach with concerns about maintaining academic credibility. It was suggested that generic courses could be offered to students prior to entry to address differences in knowledge at entry level. It was also suggested that the EU context of the programme could be delivered via distance learning with face to face meetings used to explore the national dimension.

Flexibility was seen as key to programme delivery with most stakeholders believing the programme should be delivered part-time to address the needs of the most likely student base. However there was reference to the need for a full-time programme. Most stakeholders also supported a multi-staged approach from certificate to Masters level. A variety of views were held on whether

modules should be set or elective with most suggesting a combination. Stakeholders emphasised the need for a programme that delivered on both a theory and practice base.

Funding

In general there was little information about funding provided by stakeholders, although some funding opportunities were mentioned specific to particular fields. It was suggested that the project needed to take account of funding opportunities when developing modules and that a business model should be developed to ensure financial viability of the course.

Module Content

A great deal of attention was given to what stakeholders believed would be the most important part of module content, with a large number of possibilities provided. There were a number of principles that stakeholders suggested should be core to module content; the perspective of the person living with the condition and the carer, the use of student experience to drive module content and delivery, and skills and techniques for working with people living with dementia should thread through the entire course. Module content should be based on research and best practice, should deliver on models and theory of dementia and should emphasise the need for collaboration between disciplines. For full details of all suggestions please see Appendix B, but the overarching themes are:

- Ways to live well with dementia
- Societal aspects of dementia
- Policy, legislation and human rights
- Informal and professional care
- Clinical Dimensions

Creating a Successful Programme

For the programme to be successful, stakeholders felt that it must be innovative while remaining relevant to everyday practice in dementia care. They emphasised the need for the programme to be attractive to the target group of students, to offer part time opportunities and the need to create job opportunities.

When discussing how we will know the programme has been successful stakeholders suggested that a successful programme would attract students with a variety of professional backgrounds. The number of graduating students and the demand and acceptance from the workplace were also cited. Broader references were made to attitudinal change in students, institutions and potential impact on policy.

In general barriers to success were seen to be cost, time availability of students, cultural and language differences, and differing knowledge and practice levels of students. Some reference was made to whether care professionals would see the benefit of a Masters programme and the risk of trying to target too wide a student group was also highlighted, as referred to earlier. One stakeholder highlighted the potential risk of the programme being discontinued when Erasmus funding ceased, linked to the earlier documented concern about financial viability of the programme. Another stakeholder suggested that professionals outside of health and social care, e.g. architects and legal professionals are likely to go for more specific existing programmes, such as that offered by Stirling University.

Marketing

A number of suggestions were made for ways to market the programme. Stakeholders referred back to the issue of funding and the need to make students aware of funding opportunities. National and international marketing strategies were suggested that draw attention to the pan – European and interdisciplinary nature of the programme. Promotion of a qualification recognised across Europe and the benefits to multi-disciplinary teams were also highlighted. Good branding and accessible information was also mentioned and a strategy that uses many platforms from online advertising to professional journals.