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The Future Development of the Present Combined Course in  
Social Policy and Nursing in the Department of Sociology  
and the Middlesex Hospital School of Nursing.

1. This is a short paper asking for the agreement in principle of the Academic Board for the Department of Sociology to enter into formal discussions with the School of Nursing to develop the present combined course in Social Policy and Nursing into a four-year course-unit degree in Nursing Studies.
2. The development would have two aims (i) to remove the present financial restraints which derive from the need to pay students salaries while they are on the professional part of the combined course; on a four-year degree, the students would be on grant throughout the four years. (ii) to use the behavioural sciences to provide an academic base upon which a body of knowledge related to the principles and practices of nursing can be developed; such a body of knowledge is required to answer problems raised by the increased scope and perplexity of the health care system and the challenge that advances in knowledge and technology bring to the nursing profession.
3. The Department is particularly well qualified to develop the behavioural sciences in this area as a result of the work of Professor Jefferys and Professor Brown in medical sociology and students already benefit from the opportunity to study a course in this subject. It can easily absorb an increase in intake to between 12 and 15 students a year from the existing maximum of 6, imposed by the financial restraints already referred to, within its present overall establishment. This modest increase would enable a more viable group of students to be supported and justify the operation of specially designed courses for them.
4. The Department joined the School of Nursing earlier this year in setting up an ad-hoc group to advise them on the development they envisaged for the existing course. The group included persons from Bedford College, the School of Nursing, the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, the General Nursing Council and the N.H.S administration and in the second of two meetings it considered papers setting out the history of the present course and the arguments for its future development. The group gave its unanimous support to a proposal to develop a four-year degree based on the behavioural science programme now offered to students on the combined course.
5. Basically, the Department sees this proposal as the reshaping of an existing provision rather than as a new development. It already possesses, therefore, the resources it needs while those required for the appointment of nursing tutors can be found out of the money released by ending the need for paying student salaries at the School of Nursing. However, the Department would propose that an application be made to the U.G.C for development funds (the U.G.C has said that it is willing to consider such applications) and that the opportunity be taken to reinforce the provision in the College for the teaching of social psychology.

At present, the psychology available for students in the Department consists of a course provided by the Department of Psychology which depends on the College being able to provide that Department with equivalent extra resources, a post-graduate course provided by a visiting lecturer, and a course at the L.S.E whose future availability is in some doubt. There is no doubt that the Department would benefit considerably from a more secure provision for psychology, particularly social psychology, whether through the appointment of a lecturer in the Department or through an appointment in the Psychology Department that would allow that Department to release further resources to the Sociology Department. At the moment, however, the Department is not asking for such an appointment and its proposed development does not depend upon it. Rather it is asking for agreement in principle to develop its present course into a four-year degree, admitting 12-15 students a year as part of its present establishment, on the understanding that no additional resources would be required but that consideration would be given to an additional provision in psychology if the U.G.C provided funds for it. The new degree would not begin until October 1980 at the earliest and a detailed proposal dealing with both academic and resource matters would be submitted for approval to the Academic Board before any commitment was entered into by the Department.

SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

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