

VZ

Bedford College

(University of London)

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
Head of Department
Dr. I. F. BURTON

REGENT'S PARK LONDON NW1 4NS
Telephone: 01-486 4400
Telegrams: Edforcoll London NW1

Mrs Longden,
Senate House,
Malet Street,
London,
WC1E 7HU

26th September, 1979.

Dears Mrs Longden,

Our Registrar, Mr. L.P. Turnbull, has passed your letter of 12 July 1979 to me and has asked me to reply directly to the points contained therein. I should perhaps explain that I had expected to have been asked for supplementary information for the meeting on 6th July, but I understand that by some mischance the proposal we submitted in April went astray somewhere in Senate House.

The Committee's minutes disclose two issues of major concern, the content and character of the degree and the organisation proposed at Bedford College for the teaching of Nursing Studies, I think it would be useful if I prefaced my reply by setting out our motives in developing our present course and I would like to conclude by referring in more detail to the problems we have encountered in interpreting the Regulations dealing with course-unit degrees in Nursing Studies. I and my colleagues will of course be ready to answer questions at the meeting on 12 October and we welcome the opportunity to discuss the proposal with the Committee then.

Why we propose to develop the present Combined Course

We have two motives: the principal one is academic; the second concerns resources but has academic implications.

The present Combined Course has proved very successful, judging from the quality of its intake, the academic and professional standards reached by the students on the course, and the successful professional careers followed by graduates. What it does not do is to allow the students to bring more than a very small proportion of their professional experience to their academic study of the social sciences since the latter has to be completed before the great bulk of the professional training is begun. We wish to be able to integrate the academic and the professional course much more closely. In this way we aim not only to improve the quality of the students' learning but also to prepare the ground for research into the application of the social sciences to nursing care. We believe that the unique contribution of a university to professional training lies in its facility for bringing students into contact with the results of research and with those engaged in research. In due course the research that the proposal will stimulate will further fertilise the teaching on the degree.

The resource factor concerns the numbers on the course which are at present limited to six per year because of the necessarily limited funds provided by the GNC which have to meet the cost of students salaries during professional training as well as the tutor's salaries. We are not so naïve as to argue that a simple transfer of expenditure from one public authority to another can in any sense be regarded as a saving but we are conscious that the present course, because of its size, and the inflexibility of the size, is expensive in terms of the resources it uses and we have no way of rendering it more economical by increasing the numbers on it. One academic grounds, we would in any event prefer an intake of double the present size since that would permit a more effective size of teaching groups.

Content and Charactor of the Proposed Degree

All professional degrees must have a double purpose, to provide the students, both with the knowledge, understanding and skilks required by the profession, and with a higher education to develope his or her intellectual capacity to honours degree level. To achieve both of these ends in four years (when three years in the time usually spent in achieving just one separately) we regarded as our most challenging task. We tackled it by analysing the contend of existing degree courses in the area and by bringing these results, and our preliminary thinking based on our experience with the Combined Course, to a specially convened ad-hoc committee- Individuals were invited from the Department of Sociology, the Social Research Unit, the Academic Board and the Central Administration at Bedford Collete, the School of Nursing at the Middlesex Hospital, (I refer to it thus to avoid its very cumbersome official title), the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, the General Nursing Council, and from an institution outside the University with experience of running a Nursing Studies degree to serve on this committee. It held several meetings and in due course made its recommendation to the Department of Sociology and the School of Nursing which werethe sponsoring bodies for the Combined Course and these recommendations, subsequently endorsed by the Academic Board at Bedford College from the basis of the present submission.

We identified the basic ingredient of a degree in nursing as professional training and knowledge of the biological and medical sciences and of the behavioural sciences including sociology, social policy and administration and psychology. We then turned to the problem of identifying where the honours degree component would lie. We decided upon a double foundation; to develop the academic aspect of the professional training, drawing upon the basic education in the component disciplines set out above into a programme of 'nursing studies' and at the same time to focus the teaching in the social sciences upon the application of sociology to health care and of social policy and administration to the development of the health services. We were well aware that other institutions reached different conclusions to ours (and that yet others had reached similar ones.) We considered however that there were positive advantages in having a variety of approaches to the construction of nursing studies degree at this stage in their development and we felt that our two institutions had special expertise in the particular development that was proposed. We do not nevertheless regard our proposal answer but would expect it to develop very considerably during operation. In particular, we would see the two components, Nursing Studies and the Social Sciences further intergrated.

The degree would however probably always reflect the special emphases we place on the social sciences and the special interest we have in those areas of nursing where the social sciences are particularly relevant and likely to become more involved. The Social Research Unit at Bedford College has pioneered the teaching of the Social Sciences to medical students in London University; it has a very successful M.Sc. course with an international reputation in Sociology as Applied to Medicine; for the past four years it has provided annually a choice of course-units which enables MB BS Students to take an honours degree in basic medical sciences with sociology and some twelve students have accepted this opportunity annually; and it has established itself as a centre for research sponsored by the Medical Research Council and by the DHSS. Out of this work has developed a very successful undergraduate course in the Sociology of Medicine and from this we intend to develop a course in the sociology of health care that will be the course that integrates the Social Sciences with the Nursing Studies in the new Degree. We have a joint appointment with the Middlesex Hospital Medical School of a lecturer in medical sociology, and a further lecturer based entirely at Bedford College, who would be responsible for teaching on the new degree. The Middlesex Hospital school of nursing has now had considerable experience in developing advanced courses, both the present Combined Course and the course leading to the University Diploma. While we would expect to look outside for the first appointment for the new course (and have made informal sounding in this area) we would expect that tutors already in post who have the necessary qualifications for degree work would contribute to the teaching at the Middlesex, probably in the capacity of visiting lectures.

The Organisation of the Proposed Degree

We accept entirely the points made by the Committee. The Department of Sociology at Bedford College is well organised to deal with the kind of problem. It is in fact a cross between a small faculty and a very large department with 180 undergraduate and 80 postgraduate students. It embraces a variety of social science disciplines - sociology, social policy, economics, public administration and statistics are the main elements - and also a number of separate units and sections which are responsible for their own day to day administration: the Social Research Unit, the Legal Research Unit and the Social Work Section are the three principal units in addition to the undergraduate and postgraduate sections. All units and sections embrace a number of disciplines so that individual members of the department are invariably engaged in more than one section, none of which can therefore be regarded as self-contained. There is only one head of department, and in that the department is like any other, but responsibility for day to day administration is delegated and secretarial resources are allocated to that end. The person to whom responsibility is delegated shares with the head of department responsibility for policy initiatives and is a member of all appointment committees concerned with his unit of section.

A Nursing Studies section would be established to take charge of the proposed degree and would be headed by the senior tutor. We would prefer the title of tutor to that of Lecturer on an analogy with the Social Work teachers as an indication that they must have professional qualifications and that the acquisition of further such qualifications may be counted as part of the commitment to pursue research which is required from all university teachers. The section would probably be based in premises close to the main college along with the medical sociology section, (which is part of the responsibility of the Social Research Unit); Professor G.W. Brown's MRC research programme and most of the research and post-graduate work of the Department. The organisation of the Nursing Studies Section would of course be discussed with whoever is appointed to take charge of it but it would probably follow the basic pattern of the Social Work Section. That section consists of a professionally qualified Tutor-in-Charge who is a senior lecturer, two further full-time and three part-time professionally qualified tutors who are all university lecturers, and visiting lecturers in the shape of Psychiatrists, paediatricians, lawyers and so on. There is one full time secretary, access to a further part time secretary, and a separate consumables account. The Tutor-in-Charge is, in conjunction with her professional colleagues, entirely responsible for student admissions, course planning and timetabling, and student progress, but must of course be ready to accommodate the needs of all members of the department who are involved in teaching social work students. The head of the department is always involved in cases of difficulty and both he, and the department as a whole, participates in developing new policies, just as the all social work tutors make their contribution to departmental policy making in other sections. The full time tutors all contribute to undergraduate teaching though necessarily in a very limited way because of the constraints imposed by their social work responsibilities. We have been complimented by the professional validating body on the way in which the social work section is integrated fully into the department and is supported by it whilst at the time being given full professional independence. The same principles would govern the running of a Nursing Studies Section.

We are aware of the difficulties that may arise from a shortage of experienced and well qualified applicants for the posts of tutors in nursing studies. We would plan to appoint the tutor in charge before the arrival of the first intake and to involve him or her in the further detailed planning of the degree. The second tutor would be appointed during the first year of the course so that by the time the students arrived at the part of their course where the professional element predominated, the summer of the second year, both tutors would be well established. Both would be full-time university teachers in every sense. Our experience with social work education has shown that there is something lost if teachers allow themselves to be cut off entirely from what is happening in the field in their profession. For that reason we think it is essential that the tutors should have a second base in the Middlesex Hospital and should have some connection with teaching other students nurses there. In return, we would hope that some of the tutors already engaged with advanced work at the Middlesex could contribute some teaching for the degree students who would benefit from a variety of inputs in their professional training. While the administrative (and possible financial arrangements) would have to be worked out, the probable basis for this kind of co-operation would be the appointment of qualified tutors at the Middlesex as visiting tutors at Bedford College.

~
The Interpretation of the Course-Unit Regulations
 ~

As explained in the submission, we have had considerable difficulty with the mechanics of the course-unit structure (as distinct from its substantive content) and we feel that we cannot finally solve these problems until we have had an opportunity of discussing with you our interpretation of the rules for course-unit degrees in Nursing Studies. It will probably help if I set out the substantive content of the degree as we see it and then explain the mechanical problem we encountered and so put the solution we have adopted into context.

As explained above, the degree has twin academic bases in Nursing Studies and in the Social Sciences. Each begins with introductory studies designed to provide a foundation for further specialised studies in each branch. The two branches are integrated in the second half of the final year which is devoted to this purpose. This scheme can best be set out in diagrammatic form:

	SOCIAL SCIENCES	NURSING STUDIES
BASIC FOUNDATION	Intro to Social Theory Intro to Social Structure Intro to Research Methods Intro to Economics Intro to Social History	Intro to Nursing Studies Intro. to Medical Sciences
SPECIALISATION	General and Social Psychology Social Structure of Industrial Societies Research Methods Social Policy Administration of the Health Services	Geriatric Nursing Acute Medical Nursing Acute Surgical and Obstetric Nursing Gynaecological Nursing Paediatric Nursing Psychiatric Nursing
INTEGRATION	Sociology of Health Care Extended Essay.	

(NB There is also a consolidation of Professional Practice in the Long Vacation of the Fourth Year which completes the student's qualification for State Registration)

The study time spend on the two branches would be about the same (the total Nursing Studies component would be much the larger because of the further need for experience in patient care so that with the addition of the intergrating studies there would be a majority of units in Nursing Studies.

The mechanical problem proved to be this: Bedford College accepts the University definition of a course-unit as the minimum amount of work required from an average student in a third of a year and therefore expects most students to do more than the minimum and good honours students to do the maximum (four per year) or very near the maximum. The Department of Sociology normally admits only good honour students and would certainly regard anyothers as not qualified for this degree. We would therefore expect such students to complete 16 units in four yours, including an extended essay for which there would be no specific teaching. On this basic, there would be 7 Social Science Units and 9 Nursing Studies Units, including he 2 integrated studies units. 2-2½ of the units in each branch would be foundation units. As we have been advised, and as we interpret the University Regulations, unless we restrict the number of units to 12, we run the risk of turning out graduates who obtain a professional qualification although they have failed some of their professional courses. Indeed a candidate could fail two Nursing Studies units and three Social Science units and still qualify for a degree., according to the basic University Regulations.

Obviously, we could have ignored our existing interpretation of the basic definition of a course-unit and reduced the weighting of every unit by 25% so that the total came out at 12 but here we run up against the fact that most of the social units are already established in other degrees (and we regard it as a positive benefit - on both sides - that these students will take some courses with other students) and so their value cannot be changed. What we have done therefore is to eliminate the extended essay as a separate unit but retain it as part of the assessment of the Sociology of Health Care course, and reduce the weighting of the Nursing Studies units and of the social science units devised specially for this degree. We would intend to remedy the unbalance this would give the final assessment for honours by weighting the third and fourth years substantially against the first (which we would do anyway) and the second (which consists of mainly social science units which retain their existing value). Finally we have identified as Nursing Studies units the social science courses specially devised for this degree in order to make the paper balance correspond to the balance in reality.

We are not proud of manipulation which has been forced upon us by the existing regulations. We would much prefer to base our regulations on the reality which is that we expect these students to study and require them to be capable of studying the maximum of four units a year. Only on that basis is it, in our opinion possible for a student to obtain both an honours degree and a professional qualification in four years. Our scheme would then have 7 units of Nursing Studies , 7 units of Social Sciences and 2 units of integrated studies which could count as either. This is the problem we would like to discuss, because there is always the possibility that we have got it wrong.

Please let me know if I can help the committee further. I attach, by way of appendices, (a) the changes that would be needed in our draft regulations to establish the degree on the basis of four course-units per year, and (b) the names of those who will attend the meeting in October.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I much appreciate the positive response made to our proposals by the Committee and that I look forward to meeting the Committee on the 12th.

Yours sincerely,

DR. I.F. BURTON

Appendix (A)

Possible Amendments to Regulations to provide for a 16 C.U. scheme

Regulation 2. second sentence to read:

'Each course has a prescribed unit value and to qualify for a degree, a candidate must complete 16 course-units, including 9 course-units in Nursing Studies, and satisfy the examiners in at least 15, including all 9 units in Nursing Studies.'

Amend courses as follows:

First Year

(MX) INTRODUCTION TO NURSING STUDIES (1 C/U)

(MS) INTRODUCTION TO MEDICAL SCIENCES (1 C/U)

Second Year(BC) ADMINISTRATION OF THE HEALTH SERVICES ($\frac{1}{2}$ C/U) to be a Social Sciences Unit.(MX) GERIATRIC NURSING ($\frac{3}{4}$ C/U)Third Year

(BC) GENERAL AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY (1 C/U) and to be a Social Sciences Unit

(MX) ACUTE MEDICAL NURSING ($\frac{3}{4}$ C/U)(MX) ACUTE SURGICAL AND OBSTETRICS NURSING ($1\frac{1}{4}$ C/U)(MS) GYNAECOLOGICAL NURSING ($\frac{3}{4}$ C/U)Fourth Year

Delete all after 'unseen paper' in assessment for SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH CARE and add new unit:

(BC) EXTENDED ESSAY (1 C/U)

(MX) PAEDIATRIC NURSING ($\frac{3}{4}$ C/U)(MS) PSYCHIATRIC NURSING ($\frac{3}{4}$ C/U)

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME

	Social Sciences	Nursing Studies	TOTAL
1st year	2½	1	3½
Long Vacation		1	1 (½) 4
2nd Year	3½		3½) 4
Long Vacation		¾	¾)
3rd Year	1	2	3) 4
Long Vacation		¾	¾ (¼)
4th year		3½	3½ (¼) 4
TOTAL	7	9	16 4 x 4

Appendix B:

Names of those attending the Committee

From Bedford College:

Dr. I.F. Burton
Professor Margot Jeffreys.

From Middlesex Hospital School of Nursing:

Miss Edna Blake

From the ad-hoc Committee:

Miss Christine Chapman.