

Dear all:

RE: Postgraduate Certificate in Informatics by Distance Education

The attached documents propose the creation of a Postgraduate Certificate in Informatics by Distance Education.

There are several reasons for this proposal:

- 1) University policy is to increase the number of distance education students at the University, and currently Informatics does not have a programme to do this, although there are about 2500 distance students across the University.
- 2) The School is committed to the creation of the PgCert through the award of funding to create it as part of the Distance Education Initiative.
- 3) We currently offer 5 synchronous on campus/distance courses through the MSc in Data Science, Technology and Innovation. This means the Medicine gets the majority of the income from the distance students (but also does the majority of the administration). Having the PgCert as a wrapper for the courses gives Informatics a framework to offer the courses ourselves.
- 4) One student pool for the courses (and degree) comes from company employees wanting to enhance their skills. Having the PgCert/PPD courses will increase our external engagement. This is good from the perspectives of both satisfying part of the University's core mission, and also politically (we are supporting the economy).
- 5) Informatics depend heavily on income from the on campus MSc course, which currently supports (my estimate) approximately 20 academic posts. The home countries of a majority of these students are EU + OS, which means that student interest in and access Edinburgh can be greatly affected by political and economic factors. Having a distance programme gives Informatics an alternative income stream that avoids some of the potential risks of the on campus course.

Cheers, Bob