Imperial College London

MASTER'S QUALITY COMMITTEE
(BUSINESS, ENGINEERING & PHYSICAL SCIENCES)
The minutes of the Master's Quality Committee
(Business, Engineering & Physical Sciences)
held on
Friday 24th January 2014

Present:
Dr David McPhail, Graduate School Deputy Director & Department of Materials (Chair)
Dr Simon Archer, College Tutor
Dr Laura Barter, Department of Chemistry
Professor Sergei Chernyshenko, Department of Aeronautics
Professor Lesley Cohen, Department of Physics
Dr John Gibbons, Department of Mathematics
Professor Sue Gibson, Director Graduate School
Professor Andrew Holmes, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
Professor Debra Humphris, Vice Provost (Education)
Professor Richard Jardine, College Consul for Engineering & the Business School
Professor Howard Johnson, Department of Earth Science & Engineering
Professor Bassam Izzuddin, Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering
Professor Kang Li, Department of Chemical Engineering
Dr Marco Mongiello, Business School
Dr Darryl Overby, Department of Bioengineering
Professor Richard Thompson, College Consul for Natural Sciences
Ms Lorna Richardson, Deputy Academic Registrar
Dr Fariba Sadri, Department of Computing

In attendance:
Dr Julie King, Director, English Language Support Unit (for item 4)
Mr Tony Hewitt, Programme Director, Business School (for item 5.1)
Mr Calum MacLeod, Management Trainee, Registry
Ms Kirst Ellinor, Quality Assurance Administrator, Registry
Mrs Clare Scheibner, Asssistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement), (Secretary)

Apologies:
Mr Mohammad Ahmadzadeh, Student Representative for Engineering
Ms Nat Kempston, ICU Deputy President (Education)
Dr Pat Leevers, Department of Mechanical Engineering
Mr Ruxandra Luca, Student Representative for the Business School
Mr Dean Pateman, Academic Registrar
Mr Andreas Thomik, GSU President
Dr Nick Voulvoulis, Centre for Environmental Policy
Professor Denis Wright, Director of Student Support

1. **Welcome and Apologies**
   Dr David McPhail welcomed members to the meeting and apologies, as listed above, were noted.

2. **Minutes** **Paper A**

The Committee approved the minutes from the Master's Quality Committee (Business, Engineering & Physical Sciences) held on 5th November 2013 subject to one amendment.

2.1 Item 21 should read 'Geological Society of London' not 'Royal Geological Society'; it was noted that the minutes would be amended accordingly.

3. **Matters arising from the Minutes**

Matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda were discussed.

3.1 **Item 4.4 – Consistency of Pass/Merit/Distinction Requirements (Department of** **Paper B** **Civil and Environmental Engineering)**

Further to item 4.4 the Committee considered the Department's response to the External Examiner regarding the consistency of pass/merit/distinction requirements for students taking the pure technical discipline and those taking the technical and additional components on the MSc in Environmental Engineering and Sustainable Development.

3.1.1 The Department confirmed that students taking the pure technical discipline and those taking the technical and additional components were treated in the same way by the Board of Examiners. The Department also confirmed that the Board of Examiners would continue to use their discretion, within the pre-defined parameters as outlined in the College Regulations, in relation to individual student performances and the respective level of award of degrees.

4. **English Language Entry Requirements for International Students** **Paper C**

The Committee considered a proposal presented by Dr Julie King to align the current International English Language Test System (IELTS) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores to ensure an agreed and consistent minimum entry level for English language proficiency for international students.

4.1 The Committee heard that a Working Party set up to align the current entry level scores recommended the following:

- Minimum entry standards for IELTS would require an overall score of 6.5 with a minimum score of 6.0 in each element and TOEFL would require an overall mark of 92 with a minimum mark of 22 in each element.
- Higher entry standards for IELTS would require an overall score of 7.0 with a minimum score of 6.5 in each element and TOEFL would require an overall mark of 100 with a minimum mark of 24 in each element.

4.2 Department's would be able to choose which level would be the most appropriate for their programmes.

4.3 The Committee were supportive of the proposal and noted that this would also be considered by the Master's Quality Committee (MLSPD) on the 28th January 2014 for approval by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee on the 5th June 2014.

5. **New Programme Proposal and Major Programme Modifications**

5.1 **Part-time MSc in Actuarial Finance (Business School)** **Paper D**

The Committee considered a proposal from the Business School to make major amendments to the current part-time MSc in Actuarial Finance which included the introduction of a Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate. The Business School also proposed to offer the MSc in Actuarial Finance on a full-time basis.

5.2 Mr Tony Hewitt, Programme Director, Business School, presented the proposal to the Committee. The Committee heard that the purposed modifications to the current part-time MSc would increase the number of students on the programme by making it more accessible to employers of actuarial trainees.

5.3 The Committee considered the following changes:

- adding a new module in Models
- adding a new module in Managing Risks
- withdrawing the short Stochastic Calculus module and the Further Management module
- changing the Management case studies into a stand-alone module
- changing the Applied Project from individual to group assessment
- changing the Healthcare module assessment so that it would be assessed entirely by coursework
- introduction of a multi-exit framework to include a Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate.
- the start of the year one Postgraduate Certificate programme would begin early September, to be consistent with the other MSc programmes offered by the Business School's Finance Department.

5.4 These changes would apply to the new cohort of students starting in September 2014 and would not affect the existing programme offered to the October 2013 entry.

5.5 The Committee asked for clarification regarding the allocation of ECTS. The proposed Postgraduate Certificate would be 40 ECTS whereas the College normal was 30 ECTS and the Postgradate Diploma would be 79 ECTS with the College normal being 60 ECTS, therefore, the research element of the MSc would be 11 ECTS with the College normal being a minimum of 30 ECTS. Mr Hewitt confirmed that the ECTS requirements had been set in line with the external accreditation requirements of the programme.

5.6 The Committee also heard that all students would initially enrol on the Postgraduate Certificate in the first instance and transfer to either the Postgraduate Diploma or the full MSc award if they successfully complete the Postgraduate Certificate at the end of year 1. They could also leave at this stage. Postgraduate Diploma students would have until the following January to decide if they wanted to transfer up to the MSc.

5.7 Students registered for the Postgraduate Diploma in Actuarial Finance would take the Applied Group Project with a submission deadline of mid-August. Students registered for the MSc in Actuarial Finance would take the individual Research

Project with a submission deadline of the end of September.

5.8   The Committee noted that students who failed one or more of the written examinations may be permitted to take their re-sit within the same academic year.

5.9   The Committee further noted that the Postgraduate Diploma would begin September 2015.

5.10   The Committee also considered the proposal to introduce a full-time MSc in Actuarial Finance with effect from September 2014.

5.11   The Committee heard that the purpose of the proposed full-time mode was to create a new postgraduate programme that would offer broadly the same modules to overseas students.

5.12   The full-time programme would start at the beginning of September each year. This would be consistent with the start dates of the other full-time MSc programmes in Finance offered by the Business School and would allow the full-time Master's in Actuarial Finance students to share the careers and induction events with students on the other MSc programmes. Students would take the individual Research Project with a submission deadline of the end of August.

5.13   The Committee noted that students who failed one or more of the written examinations may be permitted to take their re-sit within the same academic year.

5.14   The Committee approved the programme modifications to the part-time MSc in Actuarial Finance and the introduction of the Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and full-time MSc in Actuarial Finance with effect from September 2014 and agreed to recommend the changes for Senate approval.

6.   **Minor Programme Modifications**

6.1   **MSc in Theory and Simulation of Materials (Department of Physics)**   **Paper E**
            The Committee considered a proposal from the Department of Physics to make a number of minor amendments to the MSc in Theory and Simulation of Materials. The Committee heard that the overall changes did not exceed 33%; however, due to the number of minor modifications it was felt appropriate to seek Committee approval.

6.1.1   The Committee noted that the modifications had been considered by the Department's Postgraduate Master's Committee where the proposed changes were ratified. The Committee approved the changes with effect from October 2014.

6.2   **MRes in Advanced Computing (Department of Computing)**   **Paper F***
            The Agenda item was withdrawn for discussion by the Department with a view to resubmitting the programme modification to a future meeting.

7.   **Programme Suspensions**

7.1   **MSc in Computing (Distributed Systems) (Department of Computing)**   **Paper G**
            The Committee considered a proposal from the Department of Computing to suspend the MSc in Computing (Distributed Systems) from October 2014.

7.2   The Committee heard that the Department had recently introduced two new specialisms and wanted to direct resources towards those programmes.

7.3   The committee approved the suspension of the MSc in Computing (Distributed Systems) for 1 academic year effective from October 2014 and agreed to recommend it for Senate approval.

8.   Programme Routine Reviews

8.1   MSc in Composites: the Science, Technology and Engineering (Department of Aeronautics) 2011-2   **Paper H**
The Committee considered the programme review of the MSc in Composites: the Science, Technology and Engineering in the Department of Aeronautics from 2011-2.

8.2   The Committee were pleased to note that the reviewer, Professor Andrew George, had highlighted the dedicated Alumni section on the programme web page as good practice. The Committee endorsed the reviewer's rating of 'GOOD', the programme would therefore next be reviewed in three years' time.

9.   Entry and Exit Reports of New Programmes in 2012-3

9.1   MSc in Economics and Strategy for Business (Business School)   **Paper I**
The Committee considered a report for the new MSc in Economics and Strategy for Business from the Business School on the results achieved by their first cohort of students (2012-3).

9.1.1   The Committee noted that the programme had received positive feedback from External Examiners and due to continued high demand for the programme, the Business School had increased the number of places for 2013-4 to 182 students which would be taught in two parallel streams.

9.1.2   The Committee also heard that the Business School received the following student feedback and would be working towards reaching a minimum student satisfaction and teaching average of 4 out of 5 in future surveys.

Lecturer Evaluations (scores are out of 5.00)

	Teaching Average	Student Satisfaction Average
Autumn Term Score	3.87	3.61
Spring Term Score	4.12	3.76
Summer Term Score	3.98	3.69

9.2   MSc in Computing (Machine Learning) (Department of Computing)   **Paper J**
The Committee considered a report for the new MSc in Computing (Machine Learning) from the Department of Computing on the results achieved by their first cohort of students (2012-3).

9.2.1   The Committee noted that the programme for 2012-3 was open to applications for only three months before the MSc application deadline in which six applications were received. For the 2013-4 entry the Department had 10 enrolled students on this specialism and expect this number continue to grow for the 2014-5 entry.

9.3   **MSc in Statistics (Department of Mathematics)**   **Paper K**
The Committee considered a report for the new MSc in Statistics from the Department of Mathematics on the results achieved by their first cohort of students (2012-3).

9.3.1   The Committee noted that the programme had 20 enrolled students for 2012-3 which matched the Department's expectations. The Department had received 211 highly qualified applicants so were able to select the highest of calibre students. From the first cohort of students, 18 graduated successfully, all with at least a merit .

9.3.2   The Committee also noted that applications for 2013-4 were higher than in the first year with 347 applicants. The Department made more offers and thus, as planned, the course is running for 2013-4 with approximately 35 students, whilst maintaining the high calibre of students on the programme.

10.   **External Examiners Reports for 2012-3**   **Paper L**
The Committee considered reports from External Examiners for the 2012-3 session.

Discussion reported in Appendix 1 [not published with the minutes]

11.   **Appointment of External Examiners for 2013-4**   **Paper M**
The Committee considered the appointment of External Examiners for 2013-4.

Discussion reported in Appendix 1 [not published with the minutes]

12.   **Postgraduate application numbers for 2013-4 compared to 2012-3 entry**   **Paper N**
The Committee considered the Postgraduate application numbers for 2013-4 compared to the 2012-3 entry.

The Committee noted that there had been a slight drop in Overseas and EU applicants for 2013-4.

13.   **Postgraduate application numbers for 2014-5 compared to 2013-4 at same time**   **Paper O**
The Committee considered the Postgraduate application numbers for 2014-5 compared to 2013-4 at same time.

13.1   The Committee noted that as of the 14th January 2014 the Home and Overseas student application numbers had increased in comparison to 14th January 2013, with a decrease in EU applications.

13.2   It was commented that some Department figures did not match the application figures of the report. It was agreed that this would be raised with the Registry Admissions Team.

Post Meeting note
The Registry Admissions Team confirmed that there would be a slight discrepancy in application figures due to the processing procedure of applications before being forwarded to the respective Department's.

14.   **Student enrolment numbers 2011-2, 2012-3 & 2013-4**   **Paper P**
The Committee considered the student enrolment numbers for 2011-2, 2012-3 and 2013-4.

14.1   The Committee were pleased to note that the number of enrolled full-time postgraduates had increased by 9.8% between 2011-2 and 2013-4.

14.2   The Committee also noted that the overall number of students classified as Overseas had continued to rise year on year with a 23.2 % increase in Overseas Postgraduate students between 2011-2 and 2013-4.

14.3   The Committee requested that the fee status of Home and EU students be presented separately in future reports.

Action: Student HESA and Data Team

15.   **Higher degrees obtained and failure rates 2009-10, 2010-1, 2011-2, 2012-3**   **Paper Q**
The Agenda item was withdrawn for discussion to be represented at a later date.

16.   **Research Integrity Working Party**   **Paper R**
The Committee considered a report regarding the review of current support and guidance available to staff and students in matters relating to research integrity.

16.1   The Committee heard that following a Working Party set up to review the current support and guidance available, the Graduate School had developed an online plagiarism awareness course aimed at Doctoral students. It was intended that this be adapted and a new version created specifically for Master's level students. The working party had further recommended that, from October 2014, the new Master's plagiarism awareness online course be made compulsory for all Master's level students.

16.2   The Committee noted that some programmes, especially as part of a Centre for Doctoral Training, already covered plagiarism awareness within the content of the programme.

16.3   The Committee supported the recommendation and agreed that students should either take the Graduate School on online plagiarism awareness course or the course already provided within their programme.

17.   **Chair's Report**   **Paper S**
The Committee noted actions taken by the Chair since the last meeting.

18.   **QAA – UK Quality Code for Higher Education**

18.1   **Publication of the QAA Quality Code**
The Committee noted that the QAA Quality Code had been published in full and that a gap analysis had been undertaken regarding the code. The Academic Registrar would be taking forward a plan of work to ensure the College was in line with the Quality Codes expectations. This work would also provide preparation for the next Institutional review by the Quality Assurance Agency due in 2016-7.

It was also noted that further information could be found at the following link:
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx

19.   **Senate Executive Summary**
The Committee noted that the latest executive summaries from Senate are available

at: Senate Executive Summary

20. **QAEC Executive Summary**

The Committee noted the latest executive summaries from QAEC are available at:
QAEC Executive Summary.

21. **Any Other Business**

21.1 **New Master's Level Programme Proposal Form**

The Committee noted that the New Master's Level Programme Proposal Form had
been amended and the New Module Template for new programme proposals could
be found at the following link:
http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/forms

21.2 **Doctoral proposition**

The Committee noted that one of the strategic aims set out in the College's new
Education and Student Strategy was for the College to achieve international
recognition for a distinctive education. In order to achieve this, the College would
define and communicate a distinctive proposition for its three groups of students,
Undergraduates, Master's level and Doctoral.

21.2.1 The Committee further noted that the Doctoral Proposition Working Party had
developed a draft proposition containing four main areas which would set out the
College's proposition to doctoral students.

- Provide world-leading research training
- Provide innovative professional development
- Deliver outstanding networking opportunities
- Offer life-long membership of the Imperial community

21.2.2 Members of the Committee were invited to submit feedback on the draft
proposition at the following link by no later than the 10th February 2014:
https://edudev.wufoo.com/forms/doctoral-proposition/

21.3 **Dates of next meetings 2013-4**

Master's Quality Committee (Business, Engineering & Physical Sciences)
Friday 21st March 2014 at 10am – 1pm, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate
Friday 16th May 2014 at 10am – 1pm, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate
Friday 11th July 2014 at 10am -1pm, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate

The dates and deadlines for all other College meetings could be found at:
http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/committees

22. **Reserved Areas of Business**

22.1 **Special Cases** **Paper T**

The Committee noted the special cases report compiled by the Registry Admissions
Team.
Discussion reported in Appendix 1 [not published with the minutes]