

Master's Quality Committee Medicine, Life Sciences and School of Professional Development

15 July 2014

Confirmed Minutes

Present

Professor Sue Gibson (Chair)
Dr Christine Franey (School of Public Health)
Dr Niki Gounaris (Department of Life Sciences)
Professor Kate Hardy (Department of Surgery and Cancer)
Ms Natalie Kempston (ICU Deputy President, Education)
Dr Martyn Kingsbury (School of Professional Development)
Professor Myra McClure (College Consul (non-clinical) Faculty of Medicine)
Professor Andrew Parry (College Consul, Faculty of Natural Sciences)
Professor Simon Taylor-Robinson (Department of Medicine)
Professor Denis Wright (Director of Student Support)

In Attendance

Ms Sally Baker (Senior Assistant Registrar, Senate and Academic Review)
Dr Fernando Bello (Department of Surgery and Cancer) – for item 5.1
Ms Susan Farrell (Department of Surgery and Cancer) – for item 5.1
Professor George Hanna (Department of Surgery and Cancer) – for item 5.1
Mr Pascal Loose (ICU Deputy President, Education elect) – Observer
Mr Richard Monk (Assistant Registrar, Senate and Academic Review – Secretary)
Dr Giovanni Zaninotto (Department of Surgery and Cancer) – for item 5.1

1. Welcome

Professor Sue Gibson welcomed members to the meeting and apologies, as listed below, were noted. Mr Pascal Loose, recently elected as ICU Deputy President (Education) for the 2014-15 academic year, was welcomed as an observer to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Professor Debra Humphris – Vice Provost [Education]
Dr Mick Jones (College Tutor)
Dr David McPhail (Graduate School Deputy Director & Deputy Chair)
Mr Dean Pateman (Academic Registrar)
Dr Duncan Rogers (NHLI)
Ms Marta Sawicka (Academic and Welfare Officer – Life Sciences)
Mr Andreas Thomik (GSU President)
Ms Nuha Yassin (Academic and Welfare Officer – Medicine)

3. Minutes of the last meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2014 were approved.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/64

4. Matters arising

- 4.1 The Committee received and noted an action list detailing matters arising from the previous meeting and containing updates on progress in completing the required action.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/65

4.1.1 Minute 6.2.5 – Introduction of PG Cert in Reproductive and Developmental Biology

It was noted that this action was ongoing and that rules for progression from the PG Certificate to the MSc in Reproductive and Developmental Biology were being discussed with the Academic Registrar. The Committee was informed that rules for progression from PG Cert programmes and the use and re-use of credit would be incorporated in the ongoing work to develop an Academic Standards Framework for the College. It was further noted that the Senior Assistant Registrar (Senate and Academic Review) and Academic Registrar would liaise with the Department to ensure that arrangements were in place for students commencing the PG Cert in Reproductive and Developmental Biology in October 2014.

ACTION: Academic Registrar and Senior Assistant Registrar (Senate & Academic Review)

4.1.2 Minute 10.1.3 – Joint Management Committee – MSc Conservation Science

The Committee was informed that there had only been one significant change at the partner organisations involved in the delivery of the programme. The Department of Life Sciences representative reported that a new Course Director had been appointed at the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. The Programme Director for the MSc in Conservation Science had held an induction meeting with the new Course Director. In terms of statistics teaching in 2014-15, the Committee was informed that there would be unified teaching of statistics for all students studying programmes at Silwood Park.

4.1.3 Minute 6.2.5 (March 2014) – Foundation Programme for applicants from Allied Health Professions

It was noted that this action remained ongoing and that the representative of the Department of Surgery and Cancer would be seeking to discuss the possibility of a Foundation Programme with the Manager of the Graduate School in the near future.

4.1.4 Minute 19.1.1 – College Policy on Hepatitis B vaccinations for Master's students

The Department of Medicine representative informed the Committee that the Occupational Health Service had clarified the policy on Hepatitis B vaccinations and that the matter had been considered at the Health and Safety Committee. Students would be vaccinated where it was identified that they would be handling blood. If a student felt vulnerable then they should be advised to contact their project supervisor to request a vaccination. It was agreed that the Director of Student Support would bring the matter to the attention of the Medical and Dental Services Advisory Committee.

ACTION: Director of Student Support

- 4.1.5 The Committee agreed that the remaining matters arising were either ongoing or that appropriate action had been taken since the last meeting.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

5. New Programme Proposals

5.1 PG Cert / PG Dip / MSc in Surgery (Department of Surgery and Cancer)

- 5.1.1 The Committee considered a proposal from the Department of Surgery and Cancer to introduce a new PG Cert / PG Dip / MSc in Surgery with effect from October 2015. The PG Cert programme would be offered on a part-time only basis over 8 months. The PG Dip programme would be offered on a part-time only basis over 16 months and the MSc on a part-time only basis over two calendar years. In addition, the programmes would have two start dates, one in October and one in June.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/66

The Committee welcomed Dr Fernando Bello and Dr Giovanni Zaninotto (proposed Programme Organisers) and Ms Susan Farrell (Postgraduate Education Manager) who had been invited to present the proposal. Professor George Hanna (proposed Programme Director) joined the meeting towards the end of the discussion.

- 5.1.2 Dr Bello explained that the objective of the proposed PG Cert / PG Dip / MSc Surgery programme was to provide students with a solid academic foundation on both clinical and non-clinical topics relevant to modern surgical trainees and those interested in surgery as a field of study, with a particular emphasis on how surgery has radically changed and would continue to advance in the 21st century. The modular structure of the programme was intended to allow it to be tailored to the specific needs of individual students, with the option for students to obtain a PG Certificate in Surgery (Clinical speciality or non-clinical), a PG Diploma (Clinical speciality) and an MSc in Surgery (Clinical speciality). The clinical speciality streams were considered to be in line with the current trend in surgical subspecialisation. The non-clinical modules were intended to equip the surgeon with much needed skills in education, leadership, and safety and quality in the current NHS environment.
- 5.1.3 The Committee was unclear from the proposal documentation whether there would be a potential market for the proposed programme and was interested to learn how the Department had identified the need for the programme. The Programme Team informed the Committee that a survey had been conducted with approximately 40 junior doctors to ascertain the viability of the proposed programme. Approximately 60-70 existing students enrolled on the MEd Surgical Education and MSc Surgical Technology programmes had also been consulted on the proposed introduction of the programme. Positive feedback from both groups was considered to indicate a need for the programme. The Committee was further informed that Edinburgh University offered a successful and comparable Master's level programme in Surgery, though it was primarily a distance learning programme. The proposed MSc in Surgery was considered to be distinct from other comparable programmes in offering such a wide range of specialisms and flexibility, such as the clinical and non-clinical routes. Whilst welcoming the additional information provided, the Committee was not sufficiently reassured in terms of the potential market and need for the programme. The Committee determined that the purpose of the programme and therefore the potential market remained unclear and that the proposal would have benefitted from a clear overview of the market for which it had been designed, supported by some detailed market research that included further analysis of comparable Master's programmes offered elsewhere.
- 5.1.4 The Committee enquired about the attractiveness of the programme to the target market and therefore its future viability. The Committee was particularly interested to learn how the proposed programme structure would be attractive to surgical trainees and how they would be able to complete the programme alongside full-time NHS employment and also from which professions the Programme Team expected to recruit students. The Programme Team responded that the programme was aimed primarily at surgical trainees, as part of their preparation for their sub-specialty training and a clinical consultant post, and core trainees interested in academic surgery for higher degrees (e.g. MD(Res) and PhD). In addition it was proposed that the clinical option modules would also be marketed as stand-alone modules for

CPD purposes. The programme would also be open to potential students from the allied health professions who may wish to enrol for the PG Cert or PG Dip awards. As the programme would be delivered part-time, and the individual modules in intensive blocks, it was anticipated that staff in full-time NHS employment would be able to complete the programme within their study leave allocation. The Committee noted the explanation provided by the Programme Team but remained concerned about staff in full-time NHS employment having the time available to complete a significant research project at the MSc stage alongside their surgical commitments.

- 5.1.5 Whilst acknowledging the stated intention of the programme to provide a wide range of specialisms and flexibility, such as the clinical and non-clinical routes, the Committee was concerned that the proposed structure of the programme was overly complex and that it was therefore difficult to see evidence of staged progression between modules. The Committee also expressed the view that designing modules to function as attractive stand-alone CPD courses whilst also forming constituent parts of a coherent programme was challenging and had not been fully achieved in the design of the proposed programme.
- 5.1.6 The Committee was concerned that a number of modules contained lists of statements or objectives rather than intended learning outcomes. As a consequence, and in the view of the Committee, the constructive alignment between the intended learning outcomes, teaching and assessment was not fully evident in those modules. The Committee also expressed the view that the intended learning outcomes of some of the surgical modules appeared quite general and not significantly different to the abilities that students from a well-trained background might already possess. In addition, the Committee considered there to be limited evidence of how this learning would build throughout the programme.
- 5.1.7 The Committee also commented specifically on the three modules that comprised the PG Cert (non-clinical skills); *Research Methods and Statistics*, *Improving Safety*, *Implementing Change and Surgical Education*. In terms of the *Research Methods* module, the Committee noted that it appeared to be predominantly focussed on quantitative statistical analysis with a small amount of qualitative analysis. The Committee was unclear whether this would adequately prepare students for the breadth of research methods suggested by the indicative research project titles in the proposal document. It was unclear to the Committee whether the assessment for the *Improving Safety* module was assessing only the learning for that module or whether it was also partially assessing that of the *Research Methods* module, which would potentially be problematic if students were able to choose one module without the other, or complete them in a different order. The Committee further expressed the view that the learning outcomes for the *Surgical Education* module would be extremely challenging for students with no experience of educational theory and literature to achieve, particularly given the time and teaching available. In addition, the Committee noted that the 'critical review', totalled 50% of the assessment for the module but that it was not evident from the learning outcomes or the draft timetable where students would be taught to do this. In response to this last point, the Programme Team informed the Committee that this would be taught during the *Research Methods* module.
- 5.1.8 The Committee also noted that, on the basis of the stated aim of the programme, several of the external reviewers had made suggestions as to what might additionally be included in the programme. Although the Programme Team had provided a response to each of the external reviewer's comments the Committee expressed the view that the Programme Team should further consider the reviewer's comments and respond more fully to their suggestions, particularly in those instances where the suggestions had not been incorporated into the programme design.

- 5.1.9 After detailed discussion with the Programme Team, the Committee determined that there were a number of issues raised during the discussion that needed to be resolved before approval of the proposed programme could be recommended to the Senate. It was agreed that Committee members who had raised particular concerns would be asked to summarise the matters raised at the meeting which required further consideration and action by the Programme Team. This summary, which would also include key recommendations, would be approved by the Chair before being communicated to the Programme Team.

**ACTION: Department of Medicine representative
College Consul (non-clinical) Faculty of Medicine
School of Professional Development representative
Director of Student Support
Director of the Graduate School**

- 5.1.10 Although the Committee had identified a number of points for the Programme Team to address it was nevertheless supportive of the initiative and considered it to be a potentially interesting and valuable programme. The Committee agreed that the Programme Team would be required to address the matters identified by Committee members and any specific recommendations which would be communicated via a summary report [as described in 5.1.9 above]. A revised proposal would then be submitted to a future meeting for consideration.

ACTION: Programme Team

Post-meeting note: following the meeting a summary report was produced by Committee members, as described in 5.1.9 above, and was provided to the Programme Team. The revised proposal will be submitted either to the November 2014 meeting or January 2015 meeting of the Committee.

6. Programme Suspensions and Withdrawals

6.1 MSc Cardiorespiratory Nursing

- 6.1.1 The Committee considered a request from the National Heart and Lung Institute (NHLI) to suspend entry to the MSc in Cardiorespiratory Nursing in 2014-15, for one academic year.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/67

- 6.1.2 The Committee noted that the programme was directed and taught by staff from the Royal Brompton Hospital NHS Trust, and that staffing shortages and the resignation of the current programme director had meant that the Trust would be unable to support an intake in 2014-15.

- 6.1.3 The Committee agreed to recommend that the suspension of the programme be approved by the Senate, with effect from October 2014, on the basis that the NHLI had provided an undertaking to support current students, including any students who may be required to re-sit, and on the understanding that there were no students currently holding offers to commence the programme.

6.2 PG Cert Cardiac Nursing and PG Cert Respiratory Nursing

- 6.2.1 The Committee considered a request from the NHLI to withdraw the Postgraduate Certificate Cardiac Nursing and the Postgraduate Certificate Respiratory Nursing with effect from October 2014.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/68 & 69

- 6.2.2 The Committee noted that the two postgraduate certificate programmes had been introduced in October 2012 to run alongside the MSc in Cardiorespiratory Nursing but that neither programme had ever recruited any students, with students preferring to register for the full

MSc programme. In light of the lack of interest in the postgraduate certificate programmes, together with the proposal to suspend the MSc (6.1 above), the NHLI had made the decision to withdraw the two programmes.

- 6.2.3 The Committee agreed to recommend that the withdrawal of the programmes be approved by the Senate, with effect from October 2014, on the basis that there were no students currently registered on or holding offers to commence the programmes.

7. Appointment of External Examiners for 2013-14

- 7.1 The Committee received a nomination to be considered for the Board of Examiners for the MSc in Systems and Synthetic Biology in the 2013-14 session.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/70

- 7.2 The Committee approved the appointment of the new external examiner as presented in paper 70 [see appendix 1]. The Committee was satisfied that the new external examiner thus approved had sufficient postgraduate teaching experience and sufficient external examining experience.

8. Reports from External Examiners 2012-13

- 8.1 The Committee received the external examiner reports to be considered for taught programmes for 2012-13.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/71 and 71(i)

- 8.2 The Committee reviewed the comments from External Examiners, together with the responses to the comments from departments. In discussion, the Committee noted issues which were raised as needing attention and took particular note of areas of good practice which were highlighted in the reports. The discussion is reported in Appendix 2 [not published with the minutes].

9. Summary of External Examiner Reports on Master's Level Programmes in 2012-13

- 9.1 The Committee received a summary of the postgraduate external examiner reports on the 2012-13 academic year.

- 9.1.1 The Committee noted that the report, and the external examiner's reports on which it was based, was overwhelmingly positive and that there was evidence of good practice across the College. The Committee also noted the common themes and key areas of concern identified in the report.

- 9.1.2 The Committee agreed that the items for further consideration (common themes) should be highlighted to Programme Organisers at the next scheduled Master's Programme Organiser's meeting and that Programme Organisers should also be made aware of the importance of appointing a sufficient number of external examiners to facilitate the number of viva examinations that needed to be conducted, to ensure a manageable workload for the examiners.

ACTION: Director of the Graduate School

10 New Programme Progress Reports

10.1 MPH Master of Public Health (Global Health) – new in October 2013

- 10.1.1 The Committee received a verbal report from the representative of the School of Public Health on the first year of the Global Health stream within the existing MPH Master of Public Health.

- 10.1.2 The Committee was informed that the first year of the Global Health stream had been largely positive. The initial target for recruitment had been set at a maximum of 15 students and the stream had recruited 12 students. Interest in the stream had increased significantly for the 2014-15 intake with 21 accepted offers and 2 students on the waiting list. The stream had been popular with the first cohort of students and their feedback had been very positive. The overall performance of the students on the Global Health stream had been equivalent to students on the MPH programme.
- 10.1.3 Some minor issues had been identified by the Programme Organiser during the first year of operation, such as an over-reliance on teaching staff from outside the College. This was being addressed through greater efforts to identify staff with relevant expertise within the College. The Committee was also informed of a number of planned enhancements to the stream for 2014-15, some of which had already been completed, such as the recruitment of a new Global Health Teaching Fellow in June 2014. There were also plans in progress to recruit a Lecturer in Global Health to further support the stream.

11. Research Integrity

- 11.1 The Committee considered a proposal from the Research Integrity Working Party to introduce a Master's level on-line plagiarism awareness course from October 2014.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/73

- 11.1.1 The Committee considered the Working Party's recommendations that the plagiarism awareness course be compulsory for all Master's students, except those in the Business School [which had its own plagiarism awareness course], that Master's Programme Organisers should decide the most appropriate time for students to complete the course and that Master's students who progressed to research studies would not be expected to take the doctoral version of the course but would be reminded about the course 6 months prior to submission of their thesis.
- 11.1.2 The Committee enquired whether it was possible to attach a test to the plagiarism awareness course. It was agreed that this point would be communicated to the Research Integrity Working Party for further consideration.

ACTION: Director of the Graduate School

- 11.1.3 The Committee supported the proposals and was content to approve them as presented in the paper.

12. Reports from Departmental Representatives

Department of Life Sciences

- 12.1 The Department of Life Sciences representative reported that there were ongoing issues with two collaborative programmes, MSc Taxonomy and Biodiversity and MRes Biosystematics, delivered in conjunction with the Natural History Museum (NHM). The Committee was advised that the collaborative agreement was still to be finalised and that the Joint Management Committee had not met during the 2013-14 academic year.
- 12.2 The Committee agreed that both matters should be addressed at the earliest opportunity. It was further agreed that the Chair would assist the Department in resolving the issues in discussion with the NHM and, if necessary, the Academic Registrar.

**ACTION: Department of Life Sciences Representative /
Director of the Graduate School**

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND/OR DISSEMINATION

13. Action taken on behalf of the Committee

- 13.1 The Committee noted action taken by the Chair to approve a request from the Department of Life Sciences to change the award titles of the MSc in Quantitative Biology and MRes in Biodiversity Informatics and Genomics to **MSc Computational Methods in Ecology and Conservation** and **MRes Computational Methods in Ecology and Conservation** respectively. The new award titles were subsequently approved by the Senate at its meeting of 18 June 2014.

14. Dispensation from Anonymity at Final Boards of Examiners

- 14.1 The Committee noted action taken by the Chair to approve the following requests for dispensation from anonymity at Final Boards of Examiners in 2014-15 and 2015-16 [*which apply for two academic years in the first instance, after which they will need to be renewed*]:

Department of Surgery & Cancer

- MRes Medical Robotics & Image Guided Intervention

School of Public Health

- MSc Human Molecular Genetics

Department of Medicine

- MSc Molecular Medicine
- MRes Experimental Neuroscience
- MSc Molecular Biology and Pathology of Viruses
- MSc Immunology
- MSc Infection
- MSc Infection Management for Pharmacists
- MRes Clinical Research

School of Professional Development – all programmes

- MSc Science Media Production
- MSc Science Communication
- PG Cert / PG Dip / MEd University Learning and Teaching

Department of Life Sciences – all programmes

- MSc Taxonomy & Biodiversity and MRes Biosystematics
- MSc Conservation Science
- MRes Molecular and Cellular Biosciences
- MSc Ecology, Evolution and Conservation
- MRes Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Research
- MRes Structural Molecular Biology
- MSc Bioinformatics & Theoretical Systems Biology
- MRes Molecular Plant and Microbial Sciences
- MSc Applied Biosciences & Biotechnology
- MRes Molecular & Cellular Basis of Infection
- MRes Systems & Synthetic Biology
- MSc Quantitative Biology
- MRes Biodiversity Informatics & Genomics
- MSc Ecological Applications

15. Reports from key College Committees

15.1 **Senate:** Members were reminded that the latest Executive Summaries from the Senate were available [here](#).

15.2 **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee:** Members were reminded that the latest Executive Summaries from the QAEC were available [here](#).

16. Any Other Business

16.1 **Consideration of Special Cases for Admission** – the Department of Surgery and Cancer representative reported that there was concern within the Department that its special cases were being considered by members of the Special Cases Panel who were unfamiliar with the qualifications and career paths of allied health care professionals and that this had resulted in the rejection of special cases which the Department considered appropriate. The resulting outcome had been a reduction in student numbers on certain programmes. It was the Department's view that special cases should be considered by staff from cognate disciplines to ensure that consistent and appropriate decisions were made. Programme Organisers in the Department were unhappy with the current arrangements for the allocation and consideration of special cases.

16.2 The Committee noted the concerns raised by the Department and agreed that an explanation of the process for consideration of special cases and describing how special cases were allocated and decisions made, should be presented to the next meeting.

ACTION: Senior Assistant Registrar (Senate & Academic Review)

16.3 The Committee expressed its thanks to the outgoing student representatives for their attendance at meetings and contributions over the course of the academic year.

17. Dates of meetings in 2014 – 2015

Dates of meetings in 2014 – 2015 were noted as follows:

Meeting Date	Deadline for submission of papers
Tuesday 18 th November 2014 – 2pm – 5pm	<i>Tuesday 4th November 2014</i>
Tuesday 27 th January 2015 – 2pm – 5pm	<i>Tuesday 13th January 2015</i>
Tuesday 17 th March 2015 – 2pm – 5pm	<i>Tuesday 3rd March 2015</i>
Tuesday 9 th June 2015 – 10am – 1pm	<i>Tuesday 26th May 2015</i>
Tuesday 14 th July 2015 – 2pm – 5pm	<i>Tuesday 30th June 2015</i>
All meetings will take place in the Ballroom at 58 Prince's Gate , South Kensington Campus	

Committee members were asked to note that the time of the meeting on 9 June 2015 had changed since it was originally published. The meeting would now be held in the morning.

Committee members were advised that the 9 June 2015 meeting would be the last meeting of the year at which any proposals requiring Senate approval for the 2015-16 year could be considered.