

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

18 March 2014

Confirmed Minutes

Present

Professor Sue Gibson (Chair)
Dr Christine Franey (School of Public Health)
Dr Niki Gounaris (Department of Life Sciences)
Ms Boshuo Guo (GSU Deputy President) – *representing Mr Andreas Thomik (GSU President)*
Professor Kate Hardy (Department of Surgery and Cancer)
Ms Natalie Kempston (ICU Deputy President, Education)
Professor Myra McClure (College Consul (non-clinical) Faculty of Medicine)
Professor Andrew Parry (College Consul, Faculty of Natural Sciences)
Mr Dean Pateman (Academic Registrar)
Dr Duncan Rogers (NHLI)
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)
Mr Richard Monk (Assistant Registrar, Senate and Academic Review – Secretary)

1. Welcome

Professor Sue Gibson welcomed members to the meeting and apologies, as listed below, were noted.

2. Apologies for absence

Professor Debra Humphris – Vice Provost [Education]
Dr Mick Jones (College Tutor)
Dr Martyn Kingsbury (School of Professional Development)
Dr David McPhail (Graduate School Deputy Director & Deputy Chair)
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 28 January 2014 were approved.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/37

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/2013/37(ii)

4.1.1 Minute 4.2 – Reporting of Minor Course Modifications

It was noted that this action was ongoing. The process for obtaining details of minor modifications and reporting them to Committees would be considered as part of the ongoing review of the College Quality Assurance Framework and a wider review of the College course modification procedure, necessitated by the recent publication of Section B8: Programme Monitoring and Review of the UK Quality Code by the QAA.

- 4.1.2 The Committee agreed that the remaining matters arising were either included on the agenda or that appropriate action had been taken since the last meeting.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

5. Student Consultation Framework

- 5.1 The Committee received and considered a draft Student Consultation Framework developed by the Imperial College Union.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/38

- 5.2 The Student Consultation Framework was presented to the Committee by the ICU Deputy President (Education) on behalf of the ICU President. The Committee was informed that the framework was intended as a resource that the Union and College may use to facilitate consultation with students. The Committee learned that the framework had been developed to assist Departments, particularly non-academic Departments, in identifying the level of impact a change may have and, consequently, the nature of the consultation methods which should be followed.

- 5.3 The Committee noted that the ICU had consulted widely with individuals throughout the College and via the College Committee structure to develop the framework. Committee members commented positively on the framework and considered it to be a welcome development. The Committee did, however, highlight the need to provide guidance to students and staff when the framework became operational, particularly in terms of assessing the impact level of a specific change.

- 5.4 Committee members were invited to submit feedback on the draft framework by e-mail to the ICU President at union.president@imperial.ac.uk

6. Routine Programme Reviews 2012-13

6.1 MSc Quantitative Biology (Department of Life Sciences)

- 6.1.1 The Committee considered the review of the MSc Quantitative Biology programme in respect of the 2012-13 full-time cohort.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/39

- 6.1.2 The Committee noted from the reviewer's summary that, overall, this was an excellent programme that was practically-based, wide-ranging and cutting-edge. The programme also appeared to meet a need for biologists and mathematicians to learn the skills required to be quantitative biologists. The reviewer had also praised the dedication and active involvement of the Programme Organiser in driving the programme forward and the attractive and appealing programme web-pages.

- 6.1.3 The Committee noted that the reviewer had highlighted a number of instances of good practice, including, but not limited to, the following: use of Blackboard enabling staff/students to interact, and updates/changes to the programme to be communicated quickly and effectively; collaborations (e.g. with Royal Holloway, University of London) bringing in diversity of experience and broadening the learning experience; regular and extensive project monitoring identifying problems at an early stage and ensuring student satisfaction.
- 6.1.4 The Committee noted that the external examiners' reports had been considered to be excellent and that, consequently, no follow-up action had been required. The external examiner had identified the mathematical primer as a specific example of good practice.
- 6.1.5 It was agreed that the Programme Organiser's response had addressed the small number of matters raised by the reviewer. The programme had been rated as 'Good' by the reviewer and this grading was endorsed by the Committee. It was confirmed that the programme would be reviewed again in three years' time and that no follow-up action was required in the meantime.

6.2 PG Cert / PG Dip / MSc Preventive Cardiology (National Heart and Lung Institute)

- 6.2.1 The Committee considered the review of the programme in respect of the 2011-13 part-time cohort and the 2012-13 full-time cohort. The review also incorporated the part-time PG Certificate and PG Diploma programmes.
- MLSPD/MQC/2013/40**
- 6.2.2 The Committee noted the reviewer's comments that this was a well-organised and well-supported programme offering students a cutting-edge academic training that was relevant to their practice. The reviewer further commented that the highest standards had been achieved in module leadership, teaching practice and student performance and that there were noteworthy elements of teaching innovation.
- 6.2.3 The Committee noted that the reviewer had highlighted a number of instances of good practice, including: experimentation with 'Flipped Classroom' teaching methods which engaged students in the subject matter before they entered the classroom; the use of online formative assessments (pre-, during, and post-module); and the robust, systematic and timely approach to surveying student views, reporting the findings and taking appropriate action in response to student feedback.
- 6.2.4 The Committee noted that the external examiner's report had been considered to be wholly positive. The Committee also noted the examiner's satisfaction that the recommendations made during her four year term had been implemented by the programme team. The external examiner had identified the key strengths of the programme to be: the calibre of the teaching staff; the alignment of the course content to the career aspirations of the students; and the innovative assessment processes that relate to the professional world in which the students currently, or will, work.
- 6.2.5 In discussion it was noted that often potential students from the Allied Health professions did not meet the academic entry requirements to be admitted to a Master's level programme. Members discussed the possible value of a foundation programme which would seek to enable those students to reach the required level for admission to a Master's programme. It was agreed that the representative of the Department of Surgery and Cancer would discuss the matter further with the Manager of the Graduate School and the Faculty of Medicine Academic Lead for taught postgraduate provision.

ACTION: Department of Surgery & Cancer Representative

- 6.2.6 It was agreed that the Programme Organiser's response had addressed all of the matters raised by the reviewer. The programme had been rated as 'Good' by the reviewer and this grading was endorsed by the Committee. It was confirmed that the programme would be reviewed again in three years' time and that no follow-up action was required in the meantime.

7. Special Qualifying Examination

- 7.1 The Committee considered a request from the Department of Surgery and Cancer to offer a Special Qualifying Examination for entry to the PG Cert / PG Dip / MSc in Philanthropy.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/41

- 7.2 Members were reminded that where a candidate was not a graduate but had professional qualifications and relevant work experience, they may be admitted via a Special Qualifying Examination (SQE). Programme Directors were required to seek approval from the Special Cases Panel for a candidate to sit an SQE. Members were further reminded that the Committee's role was to consider and approve the proposed format of the SQE prior to its use.

- 7.3 In discussion the Committee was unclear about the overall entry criteria for the programme and whether the proposed SQE would adequately determine the equivalence of a student admitted via that route to a student who had met the standard admission criteria. The Committee was therefore unable to approve the SQE in its current format. It was further noted that the Academic Registrar would be looking at the process for the admission of students with non-traditional qualifications and the role of SQEs within that process in the near future.

Post meeting note: Subsequent to the meeting, Senate approved the suspension of the PG Cert / PG Dip / MSc Philanthropy programme for 2014-15. A revised SQE will therefore need to be submitted for Committee approval in the academic year prior to commencement of the programme.

8. Revising Periodic Review and Programme Monitoring

- 8.1 The Committee considered a paper from the Assistant Registrar (Senate & Academic Review) containing proposals for revisions to the College's approach to periodic review and programme monitoring.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/42

- 8.2 The Committee noted that, in response to feedback from Departments and periodic review panels, the Registry had conducted a review of the existing periodic review processes. This review also included consideration of the College's approach to the 'routine monitoring' of its academic provision. It was further noted that the paper contained a number of proposals that were intended to achieve efficiencies in the volume and frequency of review and monitoring processes and the requirements therefore placed on Departments. The paper had been submitted to the Committee as part of an ongoing consultation process.

- 8.3 In discussion the Committee was broadly supportive of the proposals contained within the paper and noted the potential benefit to Departments of simplifying the existing quality assurance processes. Some members were particularly interested in the proposal to introduce a single periodic review of all academic provision (taught and research) within a Department.

- 8.4 Departmental representatives were invited to submit feedback on the proposals to the Assistant Registrar (Senate & Academic Review) by mid-April. A feedback form would be circulated shortly after the meeting to aid Departments with this.

ACTION: All Departmental Representatives

9. Appointment of External Examiners for 2013-14

- 9.1 The Committee received a nomination to be considered for the MSc Molecular Medicine Board of Examiners in the 2013-14 session.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/43

- 9.2 The Committee approved the appointment of the new external examiner as presented in paper 43 [see appendix 1, not published with the minutes]. The Committee was satisfied that the new external examiner thus approved had sufficient experience in the subject area concerned and sufficient prior external examining experience.

10. Reports from External Examiners 2012-13

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

MLSPD/MQC/2013/44 and 44(i)

- 10.2 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].

- 10.3 In further discussion the Committee considered that further action should be taken in the event that an external examiner did not submit a report in good time or submitted a report that was either incomplete or lacking in detail.

11. Programme Organisation Arrangements

- 11.1 The Committee received, for discussion, a paper from the Department of Surgery and Cancer regarding programme organisation arrangements.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/45

- 11.2 The Committee noted the concern expressed in the paper regarding the variability of programme organisation arrangements across Faculties and Departments and the potential effect on the student experience when a Programme Organiser was unexpectedly absent. To address the issue the Department was proposing that the Graduate School encourage all taught postgraduate programmes to appoint a Deputy Programme Organiser to work with the Programme Organiser, and also to ensure that both individuals had ready access to the computer-based records. It was hoped that these arrangements would ensure that in the event of an unexpected absence the programme would continue to run smoothly with no detrimental effect on the student experience.

- 11.3 In discussion some members of the Committee questioned the need for a College-wide policy on programme organisation arrangements as such issues had not arisen in all Departments. It was agreed that the Graduate School would raise awareness of the issue at a future scheduled meeting of Postgraduate Course Organisers.

ACTION: Chair

12. Reports from Departmental Representatives

- 12.1 The Committee did not receive any further reports from Departmental Representatives not otherwise appearing on the agenda.

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 the appointment of a new external examiner for the MRes in Experimental Neuroscience (Department of Medicine).
- 13.2 The Committee noted action taken by the Chair to approve the PG Cert / PG Dip / MSc in Philanthropy for onward submission to Senate.
- 13.3 The Committee noted action taken by the Chair to approve the MRes Grand Challenges in Ecosystems and the Environment for onward submission to Senate.

14. Reports from key College Committees

- 14.1 **Senate:** Members were reminded that the latest Executive Summaries from the Senate were available [here](#).
- 14.1.1 The Committee noted that Senate had approved the procedure for the Conduct of Master's Level Boards of Examiners Meetings and the procedure for Master's level programmes to request dispensation from anonymity at Final Boards, both with effect from 2014-15.
- 14.1.2 The Committee noted that Senate had approved the revised procedures for Establishing and Reviewing Collaborative Programmes and Awards, with immediate effect.
- 14.2 **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee:** Members were reminded that the latest Executive Summaries from the QAEC were available [here](#).

15. Postgraduate Professional Development Committee

- 15.1 The Committee received and noted the unconfirmed minutes of the Postgraduate Professional Development Committee meeting held on 12 February 2014.

MLSPD/MQC/2013/46

16. Any Other Business

- 16.1 **English Language Requirements** – The Committee considered an amendment to the recommended IELTS and TOEFL scores that had previously been considered and endorsed by the Committee at the 28th January 2014 meeting. The Committee was informed that the minimum TOEFL requirement in each element had been reduced by 2 points. The revised minimum and higher entry requirements proposed were as follows:

MLSPD/MQC/2013/48

College minimum entry level:

Undergraduate entry and Postgraduate entry	IELTS 6.5	TOEFL iBT 92
	Minimum 6.0 in each element	Minimum 20 in each element

College courses with a higher entry level:

Undergraduate entry and Postgraduate entry	IELTS 7.0	TOEFL iBT 100
	Minimum 6.5 in each element	Minimum 22 in each element

Post meeting note: Following the meeting on 1st April 2014 QAEC approved the proposal and agreed to recommend it for Senate approval. Shortly after this, the Home Office announced that they would not be renewing the licence with ETS to act as a supplier of Secure English Language Tests for the purpose of student visa applications under Tier 4. The licence expired on 5th April 2014. ETS run TOEFL and TOEIC.

Imperial does not accept TOEIC and has historically had very few applicants presenting with TOEFL thus the immediate impact for the College should be limited. Registry had already updated their own guidance to applicants earlier in the year following the suspension of ETS activity in the UK. The new announcement covers ETS tests worldwide and the College will now need to review its guidance and policy in the light of these developments.

- 16.2 **Chevening UK Government Scholarships** – Committee members were reminded of the UK Government's global scholarship programme, known as Chevening Scholarships. The programme provided full or part funding for full-time courses at postgraduate level, normally a one-year Master's degree, in any subject and at any UK university. Members were directed to the website for further information.

<http://www.chevening.org/>

17. Dates of meetings in 2013 – 2014

Dates of meetings in 2013 – 2014 were noted as follows:

Meeting Date	Deadline for submission of papers
Tuesday 3 rd June 2014 – 2pm – 5pm	<i>Tuesday 20th May 2014</i>
Tuesday 15 th July 2014 – 2pm – 5pm	<i>Tuesday 1st July 2014</i>
All meetings will take place in the Ballroom at 58 Prince's Gate , South Kensington Campus	

18. Reserved Business (not circulated to student members)

18.1 Special Cases Reports

- 18.1.1 The Committee received a report on special cases considered by the special cases panel for Master's Level students. It was noted that a decision was still pending for the one case included in the paper and that it would therefore be submitted again to a future meeting once completed.

Special Cases for Admissions – MLSPD/MQC/2013/47