Imperial College London

Quality Assurance Advisory Committee
10 October 2012
10am
The Solar Room, 170 Queen's Gate
South Kensington Campus

Minutes

Present: Professor D Wright (acting Chairman), Professor N Bell, Professor A George, Professor N Gooderham, Mr D Hunt, Dr P Lickiss, Professor O Matar, Mr E Mohamed, Ms R Penny, Dr N Rogers, Dr S Smith, Mr N Wheatley.

Apologies: Dr S Archer, Dr G Gillies, Professor D Griffiths, Professor R Leatherbarrow and Dr D McPhail.

In Attendance: Ms L McConnell (Secretary), Professor R Thompson, Mr C Harris, Dr J Cooke, Mr D Jorden (for item 5.2), Ms B Lane (for item 6), Professor A McGregor and Ms N Kempson (for item 7.1) and Dr P Leevers (for item 10).

The Chairman welcomed Professor N Gooderham, Professor R Leatherbarrow and Mr D Hunt to their first meeting of the Committee.

1   Apologies

1.1   <u>Noted</u>: As given above.

2.   Membership and Terms of Reference (Paper QAAC/2012/01)

2.1   <u>Agreed</u>: The Membership and Terms of Reference of the Committee for 2012-13 subject to the following amendment (change highlighted in **bold** below):

*To oversee the processes of quality assurance for the undergraduate Humanities **and Horizons** programme**s**.*

2.2   <u>Noted</u>: The Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership of the Committee will be further reviewed during 2012-13 in consultation with the new Pro Rector (Education).

3   Minutes

3.1   <u>Approved</u>: Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 26 June 2012.

4   Matters Arising

4.1   <u>Received and Noted</u>: A list of actions from the previous meetings and progress made so far to address these (**Paper QAAC/2012/02**).

4.2   <u>Agreed</u>: Given that external examiner reports will be published on the intranet from 2012-13, DPSs would no longer be asked to write a summary of their 2010-11 external examiner reports (ref: minute 5.3 from the meeting held 12.10.11).

4.3   <u>Minute 4: Public Information about Higher Education: Key Information Sets (KISs) and the Wider Information Set (WIS).</u>

4.3.1   <u>Reported</u>:   The College's KISs have now been published on the Unistats website (27.09.12). There are two main points to note; that Imperial students, in general, have a lower percentage of satisfaction than students at other Russell Group institutions when you compare questions relating to assessment and feedback, and that Imperial compares favourably with other Russell Group institutions in terms of the numbers of

hours students spend undertaking scheduled teaching and learning activities.

4.3.2   Reported: The College has been selected to take part in HEFCE's pilot audit of the 2012-13 KISs. HEFCE would be visiting the College on the 22 and 23 January 2013.

4.3.3   Received and noted: The College's response to the early stage evaluation of KISs, submitted to HESA on the 7 September 2012 (**Paper QAAC/2012/03**).

4.3.4   Reported: Whilst all undergraduate courses have now fully met the HEFCE Wider Information Set requirements, some Master's courses do not.

4.3.5   Agreed: Master's Course Organisers would be given one further week in which to comply with the HEFCE requirements, after which point, the Registry will provide a list of courses which are failing to meet requirements to the Director of the Graduate School.   **Registry AG**

4.4   Minute 5: Award Titles for Integrated Master's Degrees

4.4.1   Received and Noted: The wording of the descriptor on Integrated Master's Diplomas (**Paper QAAC/2012/04**).

4.5   Student Charter

4.5.1   Reported: At its June meeting the Senate approved the Student Charter for the College, "our principles", proposed by QAAC. The principles have now been published online.

4.5.2   Agreed: "Our principles" should continue to be promoted widely across College by staff and the Union. The Graduate School would advertise "our principles" in its newsletters to PhD and Master's students. The Registry would also consider adding a link to "our principles" in Registry emails to students.   **Grad School Registry**

5   **Chairman's Action Taken on Behalf of the Committee**

5.1   Reported: At its meeting on the 12 October 2011, the Committee agreed that DUGS should be asked to consider streamlining, where possible, their undergraduate year weightings where there are only small differences. To capture this information, the Chairman approved the inclusion of the following question in the 2012 undergraduate annual monitoring form:

The Department's course year weightings are set out below. Where there are small differences in year weightings between your courses, please comment on whether these could be streamlined in any way or provide a brief explanation stating why the differences are appropriate.

5.2   Reported: Feedback from Departments on this will be presented to the Committee in due course.

Items for Consideration

6   **Student Surveys**

Student Surveys Working Group

6.1.1   Reported: At its meeting on the 11 November 2011, the Committee agreed to establish a Working Party to review student surveys run by the College and to develop a strategy for effectively coordinating and rationalising these.

6.1.2   Received: The final report from the Surveys Review Working Party (**Paper QAAC/2012/05**).

6.1.3   Reported: The International Student Barometer (ISB) would now only run during the autumn term. Previously, students completing ISB were surveyed twice a year (Exit and Entry wave). The survey has been revised and includes questions about arrivals, living arrangements and support services including institutional careers services, finance, pastoral care and other academic support services. The survey currently costs £12,000

to run each year.

6.1.4   Agreed: New students could not be expected to fully comment on their experience of College support services so early on in their programmes of study. Members agreed whilst the College would participate in the survey this year, that the Committee would consider again whether the College should participate in this survey during 2013-14 once the results of the 2012-13 survey were available.

6.1.5   Agreed: The Student Experience Survey would run during the autumn term 2012 for all students except those undergraduates on a Year Abroad/Industry. However, members agreed that the Dean of Students, Learning and Teaching, together with the ICU, should consider whether the questions for this survey could be further condensed.   **DW ICU**

6.1.6   Agreed: SOLE should continue to run for all undergraduates at the end of each term. All Departments should participate in autumn and spring SOLE but summer SOLE would continue to be voluntary. Members approved the revised questions for SOLE 2012-13 subject to an amendment to the second question (shown in **bold**):

The structure and delivery of the ~~lectures~~ **teaching sessions**

6.1.7   Noted: The revised SOLE questions would also be used for undergraduate medicine taught courses. Undergraduates on Year Abroad/Industry would not be invited to participate in SOLE during the year that they are on placement.

6.1.8   Agreed: All undergraduates (except Year abroad/Industry students on their placement year) would be invited to take part in TOLE during the spring term. Members approved the single question for TOLE 2013.

6.1.9   Agreed: Questions for a revised Overall Course Questions Annual Survey for both undergraduate and Master's students, which would only run in the spring term. Undergraduates in their final year would not be invited to participate in this survey.

6.1.10   Agreed: That an undergraduate project survey should be organised for final year undergraduate students in Engineering and Natural Sciences and Year 4 MBBS/BSc students in Medicine. The survey would enable students to provide feedback on the research projects undertaken as part of their course. The survey would run both at the end of the spring and summer terms and Departments would be invited to choose which of these surveys their students should be invited to participate in. The Committee also agreed that a Master's project survey should be established, following the pilot Master's project surveys that had been organised in 2011. The timing of the Master's project surveys should be such that students could complete the survey as soon as possible following completion of their project(s). Members agreed that the proposed questions for both the undergraduate and Master's project surveys should be further reviewed to ensure that aspects such as project supervision were adequately covered.

6.1.11   Agreed: Questions for a new undergraduate placements survey to allow the College to enhance its central oversight of undergraduate placement activity. Only undergraduate students studying on a programme incorporating a formal placement would be asked to complete this survey. The survey would open at the same time as spring SOLE and would remain open until the end of September. Departments would be asked to inform Registry when their placement students should be asked to complete this survey.

6.1.12   Noted: Undergraduate clinical placements would not be covered by this new survey. The Faculty of Medicine would consider whether medicine electives could be covered by this survey and will provide confirmation of this to the Committee in due course.   **CH**

6.1.13   Agreed: The College would not participate in the HEA's Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) during 2013 but would instead focus on increasing student participation in its own surveys for Master's students.

6.1.14   Agreed: PG SOLE would continue to run at the end of the autumn and spring terms. Members approved the revised questions for PG SOLE which would be the same questions agreed for SOLE (including the amendment highlighted above).

6.1.15 Noted: That while the majority of Master's courses with taught elements currently ran PG SOLE participation was not yet universal.

6.1.16 Agreed: All Master's courses with taught elements should participate in the PG SOLE survey. Where Master's courses with taught elements chose to incorporate the PG SOLE questions in their own local surveys rather than participate in the main survey, they must supply the results of the PG SOLE questions to Registry in good time and in a standard format. The Registry would develop a template in order to collect these results.

6.1.17 Noted: That the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), developed by the HEA and available to all universities across the UK with postgraduate research students, was run once every two years. The College had participated in the 2011 PRES survey. While PRES was due to run in 2013 the questions for that survey were being revised and were not yet available.

6.1.18 Agreed: The College would participate in PRES during 2013, subject to the suitability of revised survey questions.

6.1.19 Approved: The Surveys Calendar, prepared by the Working Group to communicate the timings and purpose of surveys across College.

6.1.20 Noted: That the Working Group has also developed a *Procedures for the Establishment and Review of Academic and Welfare Student Surveys* to ensure that College-wide academic and welfare surveys were effectively coordinated in future.

6.1.21 Approved: The new *Procedure for the Establishment and Review of Academic and Welfare Student Surveys*.

6.1.22 Agreed: The participation of collaborative courses in the College's surveys would be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Committee agreed that where partner organisations did not have comparable surveys, the College's surveys should be used.

6.1.23 Noted: The College is currently considering the development of a new surveys platform which could further allow the College's surveys to become more tailored and customisable for Departments.

6.1.24 Agreed: There is inconsistency in the way different College Departments, responsible for surveys, review and present results. It may be more appropriate for one single College Department to take ownership of all surveys.

6.2 **National Student Survey 2012**

6.2.1 Received: The results of the National Student Survey (NSS) 2012 (**Paper QAAC/2012/06**).

6.2.2 Reported: The College achieved a higher or equal percentage satisfaction in 2012 than in 2011 for all question categories. The largest increase was in assessment and feedback. The College's response rate also increased this year. The questions with the highest percentage of satisfaction in 2012 were for learning resources questions. The questions with the lowest percentage satisfaction were for assessment and feedback.

6.2.3 Reported: In 2012, the College had 16 subject areas which met threshold levels for data to be published. Overall satisfaction increased for 11 of the 16 subject areas with the largest increases in overall satisfaction shown in Aeronautics and Electrical and Electronic Engineering. The largest decreases in overall satisfaction were for Civil and Environmental Engineering and Medicine.

6.2.4 Reported: Electrical and Electronic Engineering achieved the highest overall satisfaction percentage, followed by Earth Science and Engineering. Civil and Environmental Engineering and Biochemistry had the lowest overall satisfaction. Earth Science and Engineering had the highest satisfaction with teaching, assessment and feedback, academic support, organisation and management, learning resources and personal development. Overall, 12 subjects increased their satisfaction with assessment and feedback.

6.2.5   Reported: This year was the first year in which students were asked about their overall satisfaction with the Union. Bioengineering had the highest satisfaction for this question.

6.2.6   Reported: The College's overall level of satisfaction remains above sector average, but the College has fallen in the Sector rankings and is lower in overall satisfaction than the Russell Group average. However, the College's overall satisfaction remains higher than other London based HEIs.

6.2.7   Agreed: The College should continue to strive towards improving overall satisfaction and assessment and feedback satisfaction. Members agreed that prospective students rely heavily of the ranking of institutions and that it was important for the College to improve its position in these league tables, although it was noted that the College performed well in other performance indicator league tables such as Graduate Salaries and Graduate Employment. The College should continue to improve mechanisms for enabling students to achieve their learning outcomes.

6.3   **Summer SOLE 2012**

6.3.1   Received: The results of Summer SOLE 2012 (**Paper QAAC/2012/07**).

6.3.2   Reported: The trends appear to be the same as last year's survey but the participation rate for the survey has improved.

6.4   **Student Experience Action Plan**

6.4.1   Reported: At its last meeting the Committee agreed that an action plan would be developed to address the issues highlighted by the Student Experience Survey. The results of the survey identified that many students believe Imperial is not quite as welcoming and supportive as many other leading UK competitors. In particular, while Imperial performed better than the sector in terms of industry connections, quality of facilities and quality of staff, it did not perform well in terms of work load, social life, community atmosphere and staff-student relationships.

6.4.2   Received: An action plan from the ICU Deputy President (Welfare) and the Dean of Students, Learning and Teaching (**Paper QAAC/2012/08**).

6.4.3   Agreed: The Committee endorsed the following recommendations made by the Union:

1. The implementation of a communications strategy to ensure that both students and staff are aware of the pastoral support available to students;
2. To increase the opening times and availability of pastoral services so that this provision is more flexible to take account of the needs of students;
3. To make improvements to the personal tutoring system across College, in particular to make the system consistently more effective;
4. To promote a greater sense of community for students via the "mums and dads" scheme and cohort building including for research degree students;
5. To improve staff training on pastoral matters.

6.4.5   Agreed: The Union would contact the Department of Bioengineering to seek advice about personal tutoring system software.   **ICU**

7   **Programme Review**

7.1   **Periodic Review of the BSc Medical Sciences with [option pathway]**

7.1.2   Reported: A periodic review of the BSc Medical Sciences with [option pathway] took place on the 27 March 2012 when a group of assessors visited the Faculty of Medicine.

7.1.3   Received: The reports of the assessors for this review and the Faculty of Medicine's response to these (**Paper QAAC/2012/09**).

7.1.4   Reported: The BSc in Medical Sciences forms year 4 of the MBBS. It is taken by a large majority of BSc Biomedical Sciences students as their third and final year and by

students intercalating from external medical schools. All students choose one of 12 pathways which differ in the taught modules and nature of the 12-week practical project.

7.1.5   Reported: The unanimous view of the assessors is that the course is extremely strong, with the students being of very high calibre. Staff that run the courses are committed to the success of the programme, which is taught at a very high level.

7.1.6   Reported: The research project was considered to be a great strength of the course but there was insufficient preparation in laboratory skills for some students on some pathways. The panel reported that there was a marked difference between the preparedness of Medical and Biomedical Science students, with Medical students being disadvantaged. The review panel recommended that the Faculty should review the structure of the course to ensure that all students are adequately prepared for their research projects.

7.1.7
Reported: In response to this, the Faculty reported that practical laboratory content is delivered and summatively assessed in years 1 and 2 of the MBBS course. The amount of lab content has increased in recent years which may not have been recognised by the students present at the review. Nevertheless, the Faculty reported that there are plans to enhance and broaden this experience throughout the first three years of the MBBS. Years 1 and 2 of the MBBS are currently undergoing a formal review with a view to integrating and assessing generic research skills in the early years of the course. However, it was noted that there is great variety and breadth in the BSc Medical Sciences [option pathway] projects, so it would not be feasible to cover an exhaustive range of practical skills to take account of the needs of all students.

7.1.8   Reported: The review panel commented that there were considerable differences in assessment methods used in the different pathways. In some cases, student perception was that some pathways were "easier" than others. The panel also found there to be procedural differences between pathways in areas such as allocation of research projects which gives rise to perceived inequalities between different groups of students. The review panel recommended that there should be more high-level consistency between pathways so that potential inequalities are minimised.

7.1.9   Reported: The Faculty acknowledged that there is variety in the implementation of policies and procedures across pathways and reported that they will seek to communicate policies more effectively to Course Directors in the future and identify where new guidance is needed. The Education Committee for Year 4 will be reviewing how projects are allocated before the start of the 2012-13 session. The Faculty reported that the pathways should be encouraged to be creative and diverse in their assessment methods within the overall parameters of the programme to reflect the content of the individual modules. The students present at the review had commented that variety was part of the attraction of the course.

7.1.10   Reported: The Faculty have introduced a system for electronic submission and marking of coursework which has minimised perceived differences between courses. This has also helped to address the concerns of the panel in terms of quality and timeliness of feedback. The Faculty is also considering introducing a common question on data interpretation as a consistent measure across all pathways which all students would be required to answer.

7.1.11   Reported: The review panel reported that there is varied system of personal tutor support for students with BMS students retaining their tutors from years 1 and 3 whilst the MBBS students do not. The review panel recommended that the Faculty reviews and rationalise its personal tutor systems.

7.1.12   Reported: The Faculty reported that they recognised the need for a more cohesive structure and the School is undertaking a major review of its personal tutoring structures. The intention is to introduce a more structured system with timetabled meetings to ensure that students build up a strong relationship with their personal tutor.

7.1.13   Reported: The reviewers found that external examiner reports were not being fed back into practice or being acted upon in some cases. There appeared to be a lack of communication between the various Faculty Committees and College Committees

responsible for academic quality. As a result, the panel recommended that the Faculty improve the process for the collection of external examiners' reports and procedures for addressing the concerns raised within them.

7.1.14 <u>Reported</u>: The Faculty has worked in close collaboration with the Registry in order to develop a system to ensure that external examiner reports are collected, considered and actioned in an appropriate manner. So far this session, the new system is working well but the Faculty will continue to monitor its effectiveness.

7.1.15 <u>Reported</u>: The students present at the review reported that teaching material was not always made available online. In response to this, the Faculty reported that due to the nature of the programme there is a diverse range of people who are involved with the delivery of the programme (College staff, partner NHS Trust etc.). Whilst the School strives to make e-learning material available there is a degree of variability. Some lecture slides are not meant to be made available online in order to protect patient confidentiality and for pedagogical reasons. Despite this, the Faculty will continue to develop systems for updating the intranet teaching contents.

7.1.16 <u>Reported</u>: In terms of administrative support for the programme which the panel recommended is reviewed for the individual pathways, the Faculty reported that they will be encouraging the three academic departments concerned, with no administrative provision to consider making this available.

7.1.17 <u>Reported</u>: The programme is taken by three cohorts of students; BSc Biomedical Science, MBBS and intercalated students from other institutions. Each of these cohorts is subject to different marking schemes and the scheme for the award of honours is calculated slightly differently for each cohort. The review panel recommended that this be reviewed to ensure parity and fairness for all students.

7.1.18 <u>Reported</u>: To this the Faculty replied that the honours year is taken by students on three discrete programmes with separate academic regulations. Students perceive that this enhances their experience and that they benefit from studying alongside other cohorts.

7.1.19 <u>Reported</u>: There are challenges in harmonising the mark schemes and the weightings of the three degrees. For MBBS/BSc and Biomedical Science students, the formats of examinations taken earlier in the programmes are substantially different which raises an issue of fairness. However, the Faculty is conducting an early years review to consider how the two programmes might be brought into closer alignment.

7.1.20 <u>Reported</u>: It was reported that the only way to bring intercalated students into line with these two programmes would be to weight the honours year of all three programmes at 100% or else to give credit for work undertaken at the intercalated students' home universities. Neither of these options is considered acceptable to the Faculty.

7.1.21 <u>Agreed</u>: The Committee was satisfied with the Faculty's response to the periodic review reported. The Faculty would be required to make a follow-up report on actions taken as a result of the review in 12 months' time.

7.2 INSPIRE

7.2.1 <u>Received</u>: The periodic review report of the INSPIRE partnership, undertaken by Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) on the 14 and 15 of May 2012 (**Paper QAAC/2012/10**).

7.2.2 <u>Noted</u>: The review panel recommended CCCU review how further improvements in the admissions process could be achieved.

7.2.3 <u>Reported</u>: The Pro Rector (Education and Academic Affairs) and the Deputy Rector approved the renewal of the College's partnership with CCCU to offer the INSPIRE programme for a further five years from 2012-13.

7.3 Periodic Review Schedule

7.3.1 <u>Agreed</u>: The 2012-13 periodic review schedule (**Paper QAAC/2012/11**) subject to

undergraduate Humanities being re-named the "School of Professional Development" and its review moved to summer 2013.

7.4   Good Practice from Periodic Reviews

7.4.1   <u>Received</u>: A report on good practice highlighted by periodic review panels in reviews which were reported to Senate during the 2011-12 academic session (**Paper QAAC/2012/12**).

7.4.2   <u>Agreed</u>: Departments should be encouraged to develop a similar template to that used by Civil Engineering for end of term reports by personal tutors.

7.4.3   <u>Agreed</u>: That the good practice paper would be submitted to the Studies Committees, the Master's Quality Committees and the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee for information.   **LM**

7.5   Procedure for Establishing Collaborative Modules

7.5.1   <u>Received and Agreed</u>: Amendments to the procedure to clarify the renewal process for collaborative module partnerships (**Paper QAAC/2012/13**).

7.5.2   <u>Reported</u>: The procedures have been revised to clarify that module partnerships are subject to review by the relevant Studies Committee or Master's Quality Committee, every five years. Subject to approval of the renewal, the agreement can be revised.

7.5.3   <u>Agreed</u>: A minor amendment to the strategic renewal form for collaborative programmes which asks for the numbers of students registered on the programme for the five years to be provided.

8   UK Quality Code

Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Standards

8.1   Chapter B5: Student Engagement

8.1.1   <u>Agreed</u>: This item would be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee (**Paper QAAC/2012/14**).

8.2   Chapter B10: Management of Collaborative Arrangements

8.2.1   <u>Reported</u>: The QAA is currently inviting comments on a new draft Chapter B10 of the UK Quality Code: Management of Collaborative Arrangements. Responses to the consultation must be submitted to the QAA no later than the 19 October 2012.

8.2.2   <u>Received</u>:   Draft Chapter B10 and the College's draft response to this (**Paper QAAC/2012/15** and **16**).

8.2.3   <u>Agreed</u>: The College would recommend that the QAA acknowledges that collaborative partnerships and arrangements do often stem from discussions between individuals however these should be driven by the strategic direction of the institution and should therefore be coherent with an institutions' strategy.

8.2.4   <u>Agreed</u>:   The College would ask the QAA to clarify, especially with regards to collaborative joint research degrees, which institution should take overall responsibility for the appointment of external examiners, in particular for Joint UK research degrees in which all Parties, following the UK Quality Code, would wish to take overall responsibility.

8.2.5   <u>Agreed</u>: Members would send any further comments on the draft Chapter to the Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Data) by Monday 15 October.   **Members**

8.3   Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching

8.3.1   <u>Received</u>: The College's response to the QAA's draft Chapter B3: Learning and

Teaching, submitted to the QAA on the 25 July (**Paper QAAC/2012/17**).

8.3.2 Noted: That the QAA have published the final version of the Chapter and an analysis of this will be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

8.4 **Chapter B11: Research Degrees**

8.4.1 Noted: A report on the implications of the recently published Chapter B11 will be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

8.5 **Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision**

8.5.1 Agreed: This item would be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee (**Paper QAAC/2012/18).**

9 **Proposal for a New Award – Extended Master's of Science (MSc)**

9.1 Received: A proposal from the Department of Physics for a new extended Master's of Science Award (**Paper QAAC/2012/19**).

9.2 Reported: The rationale for this award is two-fold. Firstly, the Department identified a need to provide a more readily Bologna compliant second cycle degree to support top tier general advanced physics courses in line with the College's Mission statement and strategic intent. The programme would cover two academic years and would comprise 120 ECTS credits, of which more than 60 ECTSs would be at Master's level. Secondly, it would allow students who had graduated with a Bachelor's degree (180 ECTS credits) to raise their ECTS quota to 300, which is the requirement for entry to PhD in many parts of mainland Europe.

9.3 Reported: The Master's Quality Committee (BEPS) was supportive of the proposal and agreed that it may be a model which other Departments may be interested in exploring. The MQC cautioned that if approved, care would need to be taken that the College's existing, one calendar year, 90 ECTS Master's courses were not undermined.

9.4 Reported: The programme detail has been through the normal Graduate School approval process which includes consideration by external reviewers. The Graduate School would be recommending that the Council approve the new award and that the Senate approve the Regulations for it. The Department also opted for the classification of MSc rather than MRes because the MSc is more internationally recognisable.

9.5 Considered: Whether instead students could be given the option to take the existing MSc Physics with an option for an extended Master's project rather than create a brand new award. Should this be the case, students could complete their award within 18 months.

9.6 Agreed: Students would prefer to enrol onto an explicit programme rather than a programme with an "add on".

10 **Allocation of ECTS Credits to Student-Led Projects**

10.1 Received: A proposal from the Department of Mechanical Engineering (**Paper QAAC/2012/20**).

10.2 Reported: Some engineering Departments allocate ECTS credits for extra curricula academic UROP or industrial placement activities undertaken via the XPDS. The Department of Mechanical Engineering wish to extend the allocation of ECTS credits to Imperial College Union recognised student-led activities undertaken via XPDS.

10.3 Reported: Imperial has a long record of support for projects such as e.quinox which develop and use knowledge and skills very close to science, technology, engineering and medicine curricula. The relevance of such developmental activities to engineering is recognised within the UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence, but many students must await post-graduate Initial Professional Development (IPD) within the

workplace for an opportunity to pursue them.

10.4 <u>Reported</u>: The model of mentored IPD has been developed within the Faculty of Engineering and used during 2011-12 to define and assess activities for which Registry can allocate ECTS credits. Students planning to undertake such activities must cite specific training objectives (effectively intended learning outcomes) from a set defined by the Professional Institution; must relate those objectives to their personal development plan and must report to their mentor in terms of them with the activities is complete. The mentor will be the Department's Industrial Liaison Coordinator or, if Chartered, the student's personal tutor. The student would also be appointed an industrial supervisor who would be required to sign-off the student's work. The mentor would also need to sign-off the student's work to confirm that the training objectives have been met.

10.5 <u>Agreed</u>: The process of assigning credits to students who take part in these schemes is still very new and some members of the Committee expressed concern with the proposed assessment for this scheme. Members agreed that if the College were to approve this sort of arrangement, that it should be available to all students, not just those in the Department of Mechanical Engineering.

10.6 <u>Agreed</u>: Any additional credit could only be awarded where there was clear academic content which was rigorously assessed. It was not entirely clear from the Department's proposal about how the training objectives would be assessed. The Committee suggested that students should be required to produce a piece of written work as evidence of their assessment which could be verified by a member of academic staff.

10.7 <u>Agreed</u>: The Department of Mechanical Engineering should discuss their proposal further with the Chairman of the Student-Led Projects Working Group and the Chairman of the Student-Led Activities Review Board in order to strengthen their proposal which should be re-presented to the Committee. **PL**

11 **Penalties for the Late Submission of Assessed Work**

11.1 <u>Agreed</u>: This item would be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee (**Paper QAAC/2012/21**).

12 **Feedback to Students on Examination Scripts**

12.1 <u>Considered</u>: Whether the College should re-consider its policy on returning marked scripts to students (**Paper QAAC/2012/22**).

12.2 <u>Reported</u>: At its meeting on the 17 May 2012, the Science Studies Committee considered a report from the Royal College of Science Students' Union. Students reported that they were unhappy with the level of feedback they received on their written examinations and that the process of receiving feedback from their personal tutors on their examination performance was not working well.

12.3 <u>Reported</u>: The Committee was reminded that students are not entitled to receive their annotated examination scripts because these are exempt from the Data Protection Act (DPA) but that students can make requests, for a fee, to see any comments written on their scripts.

12.4 <u>Agreed</u>: The DPA is not an appropriate means of providing feedback to students on their examinations because the "feedback" contained through that route is virtually worthless as it is a transcript of any comments on the examination script, if comments exist in the first place. Instead the Committee agreed that Departments must have clear mechanisms for providing feedback to students on their examinations.

Items for Report

13 **A Risk Based Approach to Quality Assurance**

13.1 <u>Received</u>: The College's response to HEFCE's consultation on the introduction of a more Risk-Based approach to quality assurance in higher education, submitted on the 21 July 2012 (**Paper QAAC/2012/23**).

14   **QfQual Consultation on A-Level Reform**

14.1   <u>Received</u>: The College's response to the OFQual consultation on A-Level reform, circulated to the Committee for comment over the summer and submitted to OFQual on the 7 September 2012 (**Paper QAAC/2012/24**).

14.2   <u>Noted</u>: That the consultation document and further information are available at:

http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/a-level-reform/

15   **Publication of *Understanding assessment: its role in safeguarding academic standards and quality in higher education* - second edition**

15.1   <u>Reported</u>: The QAA has published the second edition of the guide Understanding assessment: its role in safeguarding academic standards and quality in Higher Education.

15.2   <u>Reported</u>: The QAA states that "the guide is intended to help staff involved in assessment to use it effectively, as a means of maintaining both the academic standards of taught awards and ensuring and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience". The guide is aimed primarily at those in the early stage of their careers.

16   **Guidance on Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education**

16.1   <u>Reported</u>: In April 2012 the College responded to a QAA consultation on draft Guidance for UK Higher Education Providers on Enterprise and Entrepreneurship education. The QAA has now finalised and published the Guidance, which is available at:

http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/enterprise-entrepreneurship-guidance.aspx

17   **Any Other Business**

17.1   None reported.

18   **Dates of Next Meetings**

18.1   20th November 10am-1pm, Solar Room 170 QG
17th January 10am – 1pm, Solar Room 170 QG
5th March 10am – 1pm, Solar Room 170 QG
10th April 10m – 1pm, Solar Room 170 QG
30th May 10am – 1pm, Solar Room 170 QG
1st July 10am-1pm, Solar Room 170 QG