

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 14th July 2015

Present:

Professor Peter Cheung, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Mr Pascal Loose, Imperial College Union, Deputy President (Education)
Mr Dean Pateman, Academic Registrar
Professor Alan Spivey, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences – acting chair
Ms Karen Tweddle, Teaching and Quality Team Manager, Business School (on behalf of Ms Diane Morgan)
Professor Richard Thompson, Senior College Consul
Professor Denis Wright, Director of Student Support
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement) -secretary

In attendance:

Mr Chris Harris, Quality and Educational Development Manager
Mr Richard Monk, Assitant Registrar (Senate and Academic Review)
Dr Ana P Costa-Pereira, School of Medicine, Head of BSc Progamme Develoment (for item 5.1)
Ms Emma Charles, Educational Developments Manager, Faculty of Medicine (for item 5.1)
Dr Erik van Dr Erik van Sebille, Lecturer in the Department of Physics and Grantham Institute. (for item 6.1)

Apologies:

Professor Debra Humphris, Vice Provost (Education) - Chair
Professor Sue Gibson, Director of the Graduate School
Ms Nida Mahmud, Graduate Students' Union President
Ms Diane Morgan, Associate Dean of Programmes, Business School
Professor Sue Smith, Chair of the Medical Studies Committee, Faculty of Medicine

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies, as listed above, were noted.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The unconfirmed minutes from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC) held on Tuesday 2nd June 2015 were approved subject to the following change to minute 6.2.1 to clarify that the GMBA does not use online examinations:

QAEC.2014.90

QAEC.2014.90a

“Ms Diane Morgan explained that, in the first instance, the Business School wished to pilot offering two online modules to 3rd and 4th year students in Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering from October 2015. The two modules would be Managerial Economics in the Autumn term and Corporate Finance in the Spring term. The Committee heard that changes would be made to the modules to contextualise them to engineering students who did not have work-experience and that the assessment would

different from that for GMBA students as it would mirror that for BPES modules and would consist of coursework and a written examination (not on-line) taken under examination conditions”.

2.1 The Committee noted Committee actions.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

3.1 Further to Minute 7.3, it was noted that the changes to External Examiner arrangements had been approved by Senate in June 2015.

3.2 Further to Minute 9, it was noted that the proposed survey framework approved by Senate in June 2015 and that an update on offensive responses will go to Senate in November 2015.

3.3 Further to Minute 19.1, it was noted that members had provided feedback and that Mr Dean Pateman and Professor Denis Wright would discuss changes to *Procedures for Consideration of Additional Examination Arrangements in Respect of Disability* in due course.

4. Academic Standards Framework

Mr Pateman provided a verbal update on the Academic Standards Framework (ASF). It was noted that the following priorities had been identified:

- single source of truth
- common programme and pathway frameworks
- standardised terminology
- academic governance framework

and that in August and September the Steering Group would consider a framework for a revised governance structures and the outline for a combined, singular set of regulations with a view to these being considered by Senate in October 2015. It was stressed that these aspects of the ASF needed to be agreed in advance of the new student system. It was confirmed that the Steering Group reports directly to Senate and the proposals would not also need to be considered by the Provost’s Board.

5. Strategic Approval for Programmes

5.1 Major Modifications to the BSc in Medical Biosciences (currently titled BSc in Biomedical Sciences) QAEC.2014.91

The Committee considered a proposal from the Faculty of Medicine to make major changes to the BSc in Medicinal Biosciences (currently titled BSc in Biomedical Sciences) with effect from October 2017. The proposal was presented by Dr Ana P. Costa-Pereira, Head of BSc Programme Development, School of Medicine.

5.1.1 Overall, the Committee were supportive of the plans to modify the BSc in Biomedical Sciences and agreed a more detailed proposal should now be considered by the Medical Studies Committee (before Senate approval was sought). QAEC made the following recommendations which must be fully addressed in the proposal to the Medical Studies Committee:

- 1) Transition arrangements for continuing students (including for re-sitting students and students on interruption of studies) be fully worked out so that all were fully supported to complete their award without disadvantage. Mr Pateman offered to provide support and guidance in this area.
- 2) Equal attention, in terms of support and resource, should be applied to the cohorts of students on both the existing programme and the proposed new programme. (The Committee were mindful that that existing students should not feel they were on an inferior programme).
- 3) Current students must be fully consulted and give their consent to changes to their existing programme and students must also be consulted on plans for the new programme.
- 4) Attention given to the question of accreditation for the programme. In particular, it was felt that accreditation by one or more bodies (e.g. Society of Biology / Institute of Biomedical Science) might be important for graduates of the programme.
- 5) All students should undertake an independent project (this may also be a requirement for accreditation)
- 6) The award title be reconsidered. The Committee noted that whilst the "BSc in Medical Biosciences" was a working title and that more market research would be carried they were mindful that "Biomedical Sciences" was an established term and they were concerned that in endeavouring to move away from the accepted terminology the Faculty would be disadvantaging itself and its students.

Post Meeting Note

The programme developers were reminded about the ICU's [Student Consultation Framework](#) in order to assist them with their consultation with students.

5.2 MSc in Quantitative Environmental Modelling

QAEC.2014.92

The Committee considered a proposal from the Department of Physics working in collaboration with the Grantham Institute for a new Master's Level programme to start in October 2016. The proposal was presented by Dr Erik van Sebille, Lecturer in the Department of Physics and Grantham Institute.

- 5.2.1** It was noted that this was the second of three programmes to come from the Grantham Institute's long-term strategic plan. The first programme being the MSc in Climate Change, Finance & Management with the Business School which was approved by Senate in June 2015.
- 5.2.2** It was further noted that, whilst the Department of Physics were happy for the strategic proposal to be considered at QAEC, due to time constraints, the programme had not yet been formally discussed at the department committee.
- 5.2.3** It was noted that, whilst there would be two new modules, much of the programme would be made up from existing modules, many of these from the MRes in Mathematics and Planet Earth. It was confirmed that there was no intention to include any of the University of Reading modules from

the MRes on the new programme. It was further confirmed that the proposed MSc and the existing MRes Mathematics of Planet Earth programme were intended for different audiences and would lead to different graduate opportunities so that there would be no conflict in the recruitment for the programmes.

5.2.4 Overall, the Committee were supportive of the plans for the new programme, however, they made the following recommendations which must be addressed before the detailed programme can be considered by the Master's Quality Committee prior to Senate:

1) A steering group comprising key individuals from related programmes across the College be assembled to advise on programme content and enable collaboration (e.g. representing: Maths of Planet Earth CDT; Ecosystems and Environmental Change MSc, Environmental Engineering MSc etc.) whilst mitigating against the risk of overlap

2) Plans for the programme should be approved by Faculty Teaching Committees for the Faculty of Natural Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering.

3) Plans for the programme should be approved by the department of Physics Teaching Committee.

5.2.5 Furthermore, the Committee also wished to see the following questions addressed in the proposal to the MQC:

1) The market need and benefits to the College of small "niche" programmes over the use of umbrella programmes with different pathways (e.g. would an umbrella MSc offering an entry point into all three Grantham-based MScs be more attractive to students?)

2) Whether the programme is best hosted in the Grantham Institute rather than Physics or Maths

3) Whether standard modular sizes (e.g. multiples of 7.5 ECTS, cf. FoM modular template) could be used across all 3 of the Grantham's programmes.

5.2.6 It was also agreed that the MQC should receive a copy of the minutes from the Faculty Teaching Committees demonstrating support for the programme.

5.2.7 In the course of their discussions QAEC also considered the plans for the third Master's level programme which would be a collaboration between School for Public Health (SPH) and Grantham. Strategic approval for the SPH-Grantham programme was due to be considered at the QAEC November 2015 meeting. The Committee agreed that plans for the SPH-Grantham programme should be approved by the Faculty of Medicine Postgraduate Strategy Committee prior to QAEC and that the programme proposers should receive a similar steer to the above.

6. Short Course Regulations

The Committee agreed to recommend, subject to a slight grammatical change to 4.5, minor amendments to the Short Course Regulations to

QAEC.2014.93

Senate with effect from October 2015.

Post Meeting Note

Following the meeting, on the advice of the Research Office, Chair's Action was taken by the Short Course Quality Committee and QAEC Chairs to agree an additional clause regarding Intellectual Property. All changes would be recommended for Senate approval in October 2015 with effect from October 2015.

7. Annual Programme Monitoring (UG and Master's Level Programmes) QAEC.2014.94

The Committee approved the proposal to base annual monitoring on the principle of reporting by exception and the use of action plans for 2015-6 onwards.

7.1 The Committee noted that the data provided to departments to be used in identifying 'exceptions' would improve over time as the new student system came online but that it was the intention to flag to departments where comments were likely to be needed.

7.2 It was agreed that the monitoring form should emphasise the need to capture and disseminate good practice as well as the need to reflect on and implement changes in response to issues.

7.3 It was agreed that departments undergoing periodic review would not also need to complete annual monitoring returns in that year.

7.4 It was noted that a revised annual monitoring template was in development, along with a guidance note to aid departmental staff in completing the new form. Both would be circulated in advance of the next undergraduate annual monitoring round in October 2015. Further work would also be undertaken over the summer to develop a broader statistical data set.

8. Update on the Business School Sample Second Marking Pilot QAEC.2014.95

The Committee considered an update on the Business School sample second marking pilot and a request to continue the pilot for a further year.

8.1 The Committee agreed to recommend to Senate, the continuance of the pilot with the proposed reduced sample size for one further year (2015-6). This recommendation would be made subject to confirmation that:

1. The Business School would continue with the calibration of the first 10 scripts for all new and visiting lecturers.
2. The Exam Office should continue carrying out an audit of all scripts (whereby "auditing" is an additional check to ensure all pages/questions have been marked and totalled correctly).
3. The Business School would consider additional measures to reduce the number of arithmetic errors.
4. That differences in marks between the first and second marker would be resolved by either discussion between the first and second marker or by the intervention of a third party.

5. That the Business School would produce criteria for when differences between the marks awarded by first and second markers trigger the requirement for full second marking of the whole cohort (perhaps based on a simple algorithm combining the degree of discrepancy and the frequency of discrepancy).
6. That the Business School would provide an end of pilot report to the May 2016 QAEC meeting.

8.2 It was noted that the Faculty of Medicine were also interested in piloting sample second marking but before they brought a proposal to QAEC they would carry out retrospective analysis of their data over the summer to help inform their proposal.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

9.1 Graduate Training Assistants (GTAs)

QAEC.2014.96

The Committee approved a roles and responsibilities document for Graduate Training Assistants (GTAs) subject to the addition of a link to the GTA training available.

9.2 The Committee agreed it was important not to make the document too prescriptive and they chose not to add any additional constraints (such as whether GTAs could carry only second marking or whether first year PhD students could mark Master's students' work) as it was felt that these decisions should be left with the department as ultimately they had responsibility for the assessment and quality and standards of their awards.

9.2 Wardens, Assistant Warden, Sub-Wardens and Hall Seniors

It was noted that the roles, responsibilities and contractual arrangements for Wardens, Assistant Wardens, Sub-Wardens and Hall Seniors would now approved by the Provost's Board on an annual basis as Appendix A of the Warden's Policy and Procedures document. The latest version was approved by Provost's Board in April 2015.

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/qualityassurance/goodpractice/rolesandresponsibilities>

10. Wider Information Sets (WIS)

QAEC.2014.97

The Committee considered that College is compliant with HEFCE's Wider Information Sets and agreed to report this to Senate.

10.1 It was noted that the College Strategy 2015-20 had now been published.
<http://www.imperial.ac.uk/strategy/>.

10.2 It was noted that departments without explicit references to their links with industry would be encouraged to enhance the information available as part of the work to revise programme specifications.

11. Short Courses Quality Committee (SCQC)

It was noted that Chair's Action was taken to approve the following short courses:

- Ethics and Law in Paediatrics (2 day / CPD course /not for credit)

- Mobile Android Development (1 day / CPD course / not for credit)

12. Surveys

12.1 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2015 – benchmarking report QAEC.2014.98*

It was noted that due to staff sickness, the HEA had not yet been able to produce the expected PRES benchmarking reports. It was hoped that they would be available shortly. Once the benchmarking reports had been received they would be circulated and all academic departments would be sent their PRES action plans which would be considered by the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee, prior to reporting at QAEC/Senate in the autumn term.

12.2 2015 Academic Experience Survey QAEC.2014.99

The Committee noted a summary report, including policy recommendations, from the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) / Higher Education Academy (HEA) 2015 Student Academic Experience Survey. It was noted that the survey included questions on class size, attendance, the qualifications of lecturers, contact hours and total workload, written assignments, student wellbeing, information and policy options. For further details see:

<http://www.hepi.ac.uk/2015/06/04/2015-academic-experience-survey/>

12.2.1 It was noted that the students surveyed wanted:

1. Better information on how tuition fees are spent
2. Better support for independent study
3. More academics trained in how to teach
4. Better communication of the benefits of research-led teaching
5. Improved student wellbeing support
6. Better learning/teaching environments (and this to be prioritised over improved sports/social facilities)

13. ECTS User Guide 2015 QAEC.2014.100

The Committee noted a briefing paper highlighting the differences and change of emphasis between the recently published 2015 ECTS User Guide and the earlier 2009 Guide.

13.1 It was agreed the greater emphasis in the User Guide on standard module sizes and use of learning outcomes accorded with the aims of the Academic Standards Framework project.

14. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Updates

14.1 It was noted that the following documents had now been published:

- Subject Benchmark Statement for Mathematics, Statistics and Operational Research
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=2952>
- Subject Benchmark Statement for Master's programmes in Business and Management

- <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2958>
- Supporting and Enhancing the Experience of International Students in the UK: A Guide for UK Higher Education Providers:
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2953>

14.2 It was noted that the QAA are currently consulting on computing, Biomedical Sciences and Biosciences. The deadline for responses is 21st August 2015.

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/newsroom/consultations/consultation-on-three-revised-subject-benchmark-statements>

15. Update on HEFCE review of Quality Assessment Arrangements

It was noted that on Monday 29th June HEFCE published their consultation document on quality assessment arrangements. The deadline for responses is Friday 18th September 2015.

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2015/Name,104412,en.html>

15.1 It was noted that the College's draft response would be approved by the ASF Steering group on 1st September. The Committee were asked to send any comments to Sophie White by mid August.

Action: All Committee members

16. Teaching at the Heart of the System

The Committee noted the speech by Jo Johnson, MP and Minister for Universities to Universities UK on 1st July 2016.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/teaching-at-the-heart-of-the-system>

16.1 The speech set out the government's plans for the HE sector and covered the introduction of a Teaching Excellent Framework, the use of GPAs, value for money and widening participation.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

18. Dates of Meetings 2015-6

10th November 2015, 10:00 – 12:00, Faculty Board Room, Level 4, Faculty Building - papers by 26th Oct 2015

19th January 2016, 10:00 – 12.00, Gabor Seminar Room, Level 6, Electrical and Electronic Engineering – papers by 5th January 2016

15th March 2016, 10:00 – 12.00, Gabor Seminar Room, Level 6, Electrical and Electronic Engineering – papers by 29th February 2016

17th May 2016, 10:00 – 12:00, Drawing Room, 170 Queen's Gate – papers by 3rd May 2016

19th July 2016, 10:00 – 12:00, Faculty Boardroom, Level 4, Faculty Building – papers by 5th July 2016

19. RESERVED AREA OF BUSINESS

There was no reserved business.