

**QUALITY ASSURANCE & ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC)**

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014**

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**Present:**

Professor Debra Humphris, Vice Provost (Education) – Chair  
Dr Simon Archer, College Tutor  
Dr Benita Cox, Principal Teaching Fellow, Business School  
Professor Sue Gibson, Director of the Graduate School  
Professor Nigel Gooderham, Senior College Consul  
Ms Nat Kempston, ICU Deputy President (Education)  
Mr Dean Pateman, Academic Registrar  
Professor Sue Smith, Deputy Director of Education, Faculty of Medicine  
Professor Alan Spivey, Director of Education Faculty, of Natural Sciences  
Mr Andreas Thomik, GSU President  
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement)

**In attendance:**

Professor Richard Thompson, College Consul, Faculty of Natural Sciences (for item 4)  
Ms Marissa Lewis, ICU Deputy President (Education) (for item 5)  
Dr Julie King, Director Centre for Academic English (for item 6)  
Mr David Goldsmith, ICU President (for item 7)  
Mr Calum MacLeod, Management Trainee - Secretary

**Apologies:**

Professor Peter Cheung, Vice Dean (Education) Faculty of Engineering  
Mr Chris Harris, Quality Assurance & Enhancement Manager, Faculty of Medicine  
Dr Paul Lickiss, Department of Chemistry  
Dr David McPhail, Deputy Director of the Graduate School  
Ms Dianne Morgan, Associate Dean of Programmes, Business School  
Professor Denis Wright, Director of Student Support

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Professor Humphris welcomed members to the meeting and apologies, as listed above, were noted.

**2. Minutes**

The minutes of the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC) held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014 were approved, with one correction. Minute 5.1 should read:

**QAEC.2013.58**

*The Committee heard that there was full agreement within the Faculty that by 2015-6 the **first** year cohorts of students (both MBBS BSc and BMS BSc) should have the same year weightings.*

### 3. **Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda for discussion.

### 4. **Teaching Champions (TCs)**

**QAEC.2013.59**

Professor Richard Thompson explained that he and Dr Martyn Kingsbury of the EDU, would be meeting with a group of five potential Teaching Champions to discuss the concept of Teaching Champions further. The group would consider the responsibilities for Teaching Champions, how good practice might be better communicated, and what support would be required for Teaching Champions.

QAEC's discussion highlighted the following issues:

- Should the role be voluntary or should staff be co-opted?
- Should the role be placed at Faculty or Departmental level? If at Faculty level, should there be a fixed number?
- Postgraduate teaching should also be included. Should there be separate roles for undergraduate and postgraduate champions? The support of Directors of Postgraduate Studies should be secured.
- The role and its responsibilities must be clearly defined, with one model for the whole College allowing for reasonable variation between Faculties/departments.
- Support of Heads of Departments must be secured.
- There must be formally recognised terms for freeing staff time and remuneration.
- There should be a plan for legitimising the role in terms of career progression/promotion.
- Should the role have a time limit?
- The sustainability of the scheme should be considered.

- 4.1 Overall, the Committee were supportive of the concept but felt that a more detailed proposal was needed. The Committee requested that a report addressing the points above be presented by Professor Richard Thompson at the meeting to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014.

**Action: Professor Richard Thompson**

### **Student Surveys**

#### 5. **ICU Student Experience Survey (SES) Results 2013-4**

The Committee heard a summary of the results of the ICU's SES for 2013-4.

- 5.1 The Committee heard that the response rate was around 20% and of those who completed the survey 49% were undergraduate, 28% were Master's level and 23% were research students.
- 5.2 The Committee heard that the response rate was significantly lower on campuses outside South Kensington, and that an outreach strategy was in development to address this for future surveys.
- 5.3 The Committee heard that the survey results showed a lack of awareness of the Union's services such as the Advice Centre and Chaplaincy. The Union's report contained a number of recommendations to address this.

5.4 The Committee heard that the survey results showed improvement regarding the Personal Tutors system. However, it was noted that concerns remain as a number of students reported having never met their Personal Tutor. It was hoped that the new “Starfish” system would improve the level of contact between students and their Personal Tutors.

5.5 It was noted that 1 in 5 postgraduate research students responding were unsatisfied with their supervision. It was noted that the Graduate School and GSU would work together to improve supervisory arrangements.

5.6 It was noted that the support network for students at the College was large but that it could be rationalised and made more accessible with a ‘one-stop shop’ approach.

**6. English Language Entry Requirements for International Students**

**QAEC.2013.60**

The Committee considered a report from the Working Group set up to align the current TOEFL and IELTS requirements and to propose a minimum English language entry requirement for undergraduate and postgraduate students at Imperial.

6.1 The Committee heard that the Working Party had consulted widely on the following proposal. The proposal is as follows:

**College minimum entry level:**

<b>Undergraduate entry and Postgraduate entry</b>	<b>IELTS 6.5</b>	<b>TOEFL iBT 92</b>
	<b>Minimum 6.0 in each element</b>	<b>Minimum 20 in each element</b>

**College programmes with a higher entry level:**

<b>Undergraduate entry and Postgraduate entry</b>	<b>IELTS 7.0</b>	<b>TOEFL iBT 100</b>
	<b>Minimum 6.5 in each element</b>	<b>Minimum 22 in each element</b>

Departments would have two options for their programmes. The Working Group felt most departments would set their English language entry requirement at the proposed new College minimum but, in cases where a department believes a programme puts greater linguistic demands on international students, they would be able to opt for the higher entry level.

6.2 The Committee approved the proposal and agreed to recommend it for Senate approval for implementation from 2015-6 entry.

**Post Meeting Note**

Following the meeting 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. The Registry had already updated the College's guidance to applicants earlier in the year following the suspension of ETS activity in the UK. This new announcement covers ETS tests worldwide and the Registry will now review their guidance and policy in the light of these developments.

- 6.3** The Committee also heard that a project addressing English language entry requirements in general would be commencing shortly.

**Action: Mr Dean Pateman & Centre for Academic English**

- 6.4** The Committee heard that a wider project addressing the College's overall entry requirements and approach to equivalents would be undertaken by the Academic Registrar and this may also require the involvement of the Centre for Academic English.

**Action: Mr Dean Pateman**

**7. Student Consultation Framework**

**QAEC.2013.61**

The Committee considered a draft of the Student Consultation Framework presented by the President of Imperial College Union (ICU).

- 7.1** It was noted that the Framework would benefit from a concise summary or abstract on the first page and that a condensed one-page version would be a useful marketing tool.

- 7.2** The Committee supported the Framework and agreed it was a positive step and represented commitment to student collaboration and engagement across the College.

- 7.3** It was noted that the Framework would be presented for approval by the Senate in May; that it may be used before then; and that it would be incorporated into the ICU operating plan for the 2014-15 academic year.

- 7.4** It was agreed that QAEC would be interested in receiving a report on the progress of the Framework in a year's time.

**Action: ICU President**

**8 Level 7 Pass Mark of Degrees in the Faculty of Engineering**

**QAEC.2013.62**

The Committee received a report regarding the harmonisation of level 7 pass marks.

- 8.1** The Committee agreed that further discussion was required with the Faculty of Engineering and that the Vice Provost (Education) and the Academic Registrar should meet with the Dean and Vice Dean (Education) of the Faculty of Engineering.

**Action: Professor Debra Humphris and Mr Dean Pateman**

**9. Competence Standards**

**QAEC.2013.63**

The Committee received a guidance document on competence standards and noted that work to ensure that competence standards documents were in place across the College and readily available to prospective students was incomplete.

- 9.1** It was noted that, in order to be compliant with disability legislation, each programme in the College should have a publically available competence standards document. Work had started on this a year ago with umbrella statements for each Faculty for undergraduate programmes being completed but these were not always readily available.
- 9.2** FoNs reported that whilst they agreed with the principles of competency standards that they would always endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to their programmes and as a result competency standards may be a negative step. FoNs also reported that they felt that the statements should be held on the Disability Advisory Service (DAS) website and not their own. FoNs confirmed that they had completed a generic statement for their UG programmes but had not done so for their PG programmes.
- 9.3** Medicine expressed concerns about raising expectations by providing competence standards documents as they could help students through a programme but this might mean that they had provided a student with a qualification for which they would not be able to practice as a career due to the GMC registration requirements. The Committee noted that Medicine already have competency standards which are published on-line.
- 9.5** Overall, it was agreed that this issue should be looked at again and it was agreed that, as this fed into the work Mr Dean Pateman, Academic Registrar, would be carrying out regarding the public availability of programme information, he would set up a meeting with Ms Mary Bown, Head of the Disability Advisory Service (DAS), to address the points outlined above.

**Action: Mr Dean Pateman**

**10. Chair's Action**

The Committee heard that the Chair had approved the appointment of an external examiner for the Philosophy module offered by the Centre for Co-Curricular Studies.

**11. Any Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

**12. Dates of next meetings 2013-4**

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014, 10am -1pm, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014, 10am -1pm, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate

**13. Reserved Areas of Business**

There were no reserved areas of business.