Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)
Unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 3rd March 2015

Present:
Professor Debra Humphris, Vice Provost (Education) - Chair
Professor Peter Cheung, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Professor Sue Gibson, Director of the Graduate School
Mr Pascal Loose, Imperial College Union Deputy President (Education)
Ms Diane Morgan, Associate Dean of Programmes, Business School
Mr Dean Pateman, Academic Registrar
Professor Alan Spivey, Director of Education, Faculty of Natural Sciences
Professor Richard Thompson, Senior College Consul
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement) - Secretary

In attendance:
Mr Chris Harris, Quality and Educational Development Manager

Apologies:
Ms Nida Mahmud, Graduate Students' Union President
Dr David McPhail, Deputy Director of the Graduate School
Professor Sue Smith, Chair of the Medical Studies Committee, Faculty of Medicine
Professor Denis Wright, Director of Student Support

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

2.	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting**	QAEC.2014.53
2.1	The Committee approved the unconfirmed minutes from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC) held on Thursday 22nd January 2015 and noted Committee Actions.	QAEC.2014.53a

2.2   The Committee noted feedback from the extraordinary meeting of QAEC and the Staff-Student Committee Chairs which had been held on Wednesday 25th February 2015.

2.2.1   It was noted that the following issues were raised:
- Lecture Recording
- Timetabling – exam clashes
- Assessment feedback / GTA training/quality
- Student feedback on programme – SOLE survey timing
- Variation in Personal tutoring
- Cohort Building (PGR)
- Staff-Student Committee structures (for Master's level)

2.2.2   The Committee agreed that there was a particular need for better and more consistent training of GTAs across the College. It was agreed that, over the coming year, the Graduate School should lead on developing, in

consultation with faculties and departments, a framework for GTAs. The framework would cover such issues as:

- Recruitment and selection
- Training, support and development
- Defining roles and responsibilities
- Managing expectations
- Valuing GTAs and funding for the role

It was further agreed that the Graduate School should compile and consider good practice from across the sector in their deliberations.

Action: Professor Sue Gibson

2.2.4   It was agreed that the Graduate School and ICU should work with departments to improve the representation of postgraduate issues at Staff-Student Committees.

Action: Professor Sue Gibson/Mr Pascal Loose

2.2.3   It was agreed that the meeting had been useful and that it would therefore become an annual occurrence, scheduled on a Wednesday early evening, with separate meetings for UG and PG students. It was further agreed that consideration would be given to whether to split the PG meeting into taught (Master's level) and research.

Post Meeting Note
It was agreed that the postgraduate meeting would be helpfully divided between taught (Master's level) and research.
The presentation from the ICU for the event can be viewed in the Supporting Papers folder for the meeting at: \\icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk\Registry\10.Committees\QAEC

3.   **Matters arising from the Minutes**
There were no matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda

4.   **Periodic Review Reports**

4.1   **Update following Periodic Review of Master's Programmes for the School of Public Health**
Mr Chris Harris reported on progress made in respect of training of GTAs which had been raised as an issue in the periodic review of Master's programmes in the School for Public Health.

4.1.1   Mr Harris reported that this was under active consideration by the Medicine Strategy Committee who wished to have a faculty-wide consistent approach to the use and training of GTAs. Initial discussions had therefore taken place with the Graduate School and EDU to progress this.

4.3   **Update following the Periodic Review of Master's programmes in the Department of Life Sciences (2012-3)**
It was noted that a draft agreement with the Natural History Museum (NHM) had been drawn up and it was under review by Legal Services prior to signing. A meeting with the NHM and department would be held in May and regular six monthly meetings would be scheduled after that. The

Department had also confirmed that the relationship with the NHM was improving and cohort building activities for students of the Department/NHM were going well. The Committee were satisfied with the progress made.

5. **Sharing Good Practice**   QAEC.2014.54
   The Committee considered current practice in the sharing and dissemination of good practice and considered ways in which this could be improved.

5.1 The Faculty representatives shared examples of their current practices which, among other things, included Faculty Away Days and meetings where good practice was shared.

5.2 It was noted that the Faculty of Engineering (FOE) were currently focusing their Away Day on how they should differentiate their degrees from those of other universities. The FoE had identified 3 characteristics which they felt their graduates should be able to demonstrate:
   1) Creativity
   2) Leadership
   3) Entrepreneurship

   and DUGS would be asked to ensure all students had opportunities to develop these skills within the curriculum. Professor Humphris reported that Dr Bridgette Duncombe was currently leading a piece of work on revising the College's Graduate Attributes and encouraged the FoE to connect their work with the wider Collage project. Professor Humphris also reminded the Faculty that if the three above characteristics were curriculum based then they should be clearly mapped to the learning outcomes for each programme.

5.3 It was felt that a lot of good practice was raised in the SOLE lecturer/modules surveys in the free text comments and it was agreed that better use should be made of these.

6. **Our Principles**   QAEC.2014.55
   The Committee considered whether changes are need to "Our Principles" for 2015-6.

6.1 It was agreed that it was timely to refresh the document and that the current document was about the right length. It was suggested that alumni and lifelong connection with Imperial needed to be incorporated in the revised version and there was also support for making the principles more ambitious. It was also agreed that the document needed to be better communicated to stakeholders.

6.2 Professor Humphris agreed to lead the updating of the document with a view to having a revised version considered at the June 2015 Senate.
                                            Action: Professor Debra Humphris

7. **Appointment of External Examiners to the Lee Kong Chian School of   QAEC.2014.56
   Medicine**

The Committee endorsed a practical proposal concerning the appointment of External Examiners to the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine.

Post Meeting Note
It was clarified that the 5th external examiner was not an academic appointment.

8. QAA Consultations

8.1 **Assuring Quality for International Students Studying in the UK: A Guide for UK Higher Education Providers**   QAEC.2014.57
The Committee approved a draft response to the QAA consultation.

Post Meeting Note:
The response was submitted and can be viewed in the Supporting Papers folder for the meeting at: \\icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk\Registry\10.Committees\QAEC

8.2 **Other consultations**
It was noted that the College has submitted responses to the following consultations:

Qualifications Awarded by Two or More Degree Awarding Bodies
Master's Degrees Characteristics
Doctoral Degree Characteristics

The final responses can be viewed in the Supporting Papers folder for the meeting at: \\icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk\Registry\10.Committees\QAEC

8.3 It was noted that the QAA was also currently consulting on the study of Economics and benchmark statements in:
Economics
Finance
Master's Degrees in Business and Management
Mathematics, Statistics and Operational Research

and that the relevant departments had been asked to make a response and inform QAEC.

9. Surveys

9.1 **UG SOLE lecturer/module results for the Faculties Engineering and Natural Sciences – Autumn Term 2014**   QAEC.2014.58
The Committee considered the UG SOLE results for the Autumn Term 2014.

9.1.1 The Committee were pleased to see that the results included a comparison with the Autumn Term 2013 results. It was noted that it was not possible to include results from previous years as different SOLE questions and response set had been used in previous years.   The Faculties agreed to circulate the reports to their departments for further consideration at departmental/Faculty level.

9.1.2   Overall, the autumn term results for the 2013 and 2014 were consistent. The Faculty Reps reported they would be investigating instances where drops in satisfaction had occurred.

9.1.3   It was reported that the SOLE lecture/modules questions would remain the same for 2015-6 so that trend data for 3 years could be compiled.

9.2   **UG SOLE lecturer/module results for the Faculty of Medicine – Autumn Term 2014**   QAEC.2014.59
The Committee considered the UG SOLE results for the Faculty of Medicine for Autumn Term 2014.

9.2.1   Mr Chris Harris reported that action was being taken to address areas which had the lowest satisfaction scores.

9.3   **PG SOLE lecturer/module results for Engineering and Natural Sciences and Medicine - Autumn Term 2014**   QAEC.2014.60
The Committee considered the PG SOLE results for the Autumn Term 2014, which also included a comparison with the Autumn Term 2013 results.

9.3.1   It was clarified that the results for the Centre for Co-Curricular referred to the Master's programmes in that department and not the Horizons courses. The results for the Horizons courses would be available in the spring.

9.4   **Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2014**
It was noted that PRES 2015 was launched on Monday 2nd March 2015 and would close on Thursday 14th May 2015. The participation rate was currently at 3%. Departments were encouraged to promote the survey.

10.   **Competence Standards**
The Committee noted an update from Mr Dean Pateman, Academic Registrar.

10.1   Mr Pateman reported that he had met with Ms Mary Bown of the Disability Advisory Service and they had agreed to set up a working party to look at competence standards in the context of programme outcomes and in light of the work being undertaken to improve programme specifications. The work would be untaken over the current year.

Action: Mr Dean Pateman

10.2   Mr Pateman confirmed that competence standards were needed at a programme level and the working group would look again at the guidance and requirements and would establish whether a core set of principles for each Faculty could suffice for all their programmes.

Action: Mr Dean Pateman

11.   **Academic Standards Framework**   QAEC.2014.61
The Committee received an update regarding the Academic Standards Framework.

11.1   It was noted that Senate had now endorsed the establishment of a cross

College steering group which would combine work on the Academic Standards Framework with the preparations for the College's Higher Education Review which was currently scheduled to take place n 2016-7.

12.   Academic Integrity Working Groups
It was noted that three Academic Integrity Working Groups, each chaired by a College Consul, were being set up to look into and advise on the following aspects of academic integrity:

- Complaints and Appeals (to be Chaired by Professor Andrew Parry)
- Plagiarism (to be Chaired by Professor John Seddon)
- Assessment Practices (to be chaired by Professor Richard Thompson)

12.1   It was noted that the Terms of Reference for the Working Groups would be drafted shortly and a way forward agreed with the Chairs.   It was confirmed the student representatives would be included in the working group membership.

13.   Chair's Action   QAEC.2014.62
The Committee noted a report from the Chair regarding action taken on behalf of the Committee since the last meeting. It was noted that these were the final two appointments for Centre for Co-Curricular Studies for 2014-5 and appointments for 2015-6 would now go to the Short Course Quality Committee.

14.   Short Course Quality Committee
It was noted that Chair's Action had been taken to approve two summer schools in the Department of Chemical Engineering. The summer schools were bespoke courses for US institutions.

15.   Short Courses – Terms and Conditions update
It was noted that Legal Services would be drawing up a check list of items for possible inclusion in Terms and Conditions for departments offering short courses.   The Legal Services Team would then work with each department individually to ensure that that they have terms and conditions which were enforceable, and that enrolment, payments, refunds, etc., work in the way the department intended.

15.1   More generally it was noted at Imperial had performed well in a recent Which? Report called "Higher Education: a review of providers' rights to change courses". The report can be viewed in the Supporting Papers file for the meeting: \\icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk\Registry\10.Committees\QAEC

16   HEFCE Consultation on the Future of Quality Assessment Arrangements

16.1   The Committee noted the College response to HEFCE's review of Quality Assessment Arrangements. This can be viewed in the Supporting Papers file for the meeting: \\icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk\Registry\10.Committees\QAEC

16.2   It was noted that HEFCE has published two studies on what other sectors and countries do to support their discussions with stakeholders about future approaches to quality assessment. The studies are:

- **International comparator study to inform the quality assessment review in England, Wales and Northern Ireland:** An account of approaches to quality in three competitor countries: Norway, America and Australia, focusing on the role of audit and reporting; the burden of different approaches, and the role of outcomes-based approaches.

- **Approaches to regulation in other UK sectors:** The study analyses approaches in advertising, qualifications, financial services, accountancy and audit.

The documents can be found at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2015/name,100748,en.html

16.3 It was noted that HEFCE had commissioned a study by KPMG into the costs of existing quality assurance and assessment practices to better understand these costs and to inform the review of future approaches to quality assessment in higher education. As part of the study KPMG would be visiting a sample of institutions and would also be issuing a sector-wide survey to gain a broad consensus for the cost drivers of different quality-related activities and the appropriateness of the costing methodology to be applied to these. It was anticipated that the survey will be issued to institutions in March to be completed within two weeks mainly by staff in Finance Offices and by those with responsibility for academic quality policies and processes.

16.4 It was noted that HEFCE had commissioned the HEA to review external examining arrangements in the UK. The Committee considered a draft response. Further details of the project (and surveys) can be found at: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/project/10874 QAEC.2014.63
Committee members were asked to submit comments on the draft response to Ms Sophie White by 5th March 2015.

Post Meeting Note
The final response was submitted and can be viewed in the Supporting Papers file for the meeting: \\icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk\Registry\10.Committees\QAEC

17.   Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Updates
The QAA have responded to the Gaskell Review. Universities UK has published *Quality, equity, sustainability: the future of higher education regulation*. The report is the outcome of the Regulation Task and Finish Group chaired by Professor Simon Gaskell, President and Principal of Queen Mary University of London. Responding to the report, Anthony McClaran, Chief Executive of QAA said: '*Simon Gaskell's report is right to champion co-regulation as the premise for good quality assurance in our higher education sector. QAA review fully supports this principle. Our independent teams of peer reviewers check that universities and other higher education providers are meeting their responsibilities for maintaining the academic standards and quality of higher education.*'

18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

18.1 **HEFCE: STEM accreditation reviews launched**
It was noted that the announcement of the Government's science and innovation strategy in December included a commission to establish a general review of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and a specific review of computer science degree accreditation arrangements. The reviews would explore issues around graduate employability and consider options for how they could be addressed. HEFCE would be supporting both reviews with evidence gathering and analysis, with sector and accrediting body engagement, and with alignment with the current quality assessment review.

For more information see:
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2015/name,101270,en.html

18.2 It was noted that the QAA has published revised benchmark statements for Engineering and Business & Management. The Faculty of Engineering and the Business School had been notified.

18.3 **UK Visas and Immigration – Highly Trusted Sponsor Status**
It was noted that, from the 1st April 2015, the UK Visa's and Immigration had were changing their terminology. Institutions would no longer be able to use the term "highly trusted sponsor" and would instead only be able to use the term "trusted sponsor". The Registry would update their websites accordingly.

18.4 **Competition and Marketing Authority (CMA) - Consumer Law advice for providers and students**
It was noted that the CMA had published consumer law advice for providers and students. The Registry would be leading on considering implications for the College and would advise accordingly shortly. The advice can be found at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers-and-students

18.5 **English Language**
It was noted that UK government had announced important changes to English language testing for visas and immigration, consolidating the number of tests accepted for visa purposes (Secure English Language Tests – SELTs). Where proof of English level is required for visa purposes, IELTS is now the only test selected by the UK government for people applying for UK visas around the world, and one of two tests selected for people applying in the UK. (The other test is Trinity College London). The change will take effect from 6th April 2015.

19. **Dates of meetings 2014-15**
28 Apr 2015, 10:00, Boardroom, Faculty Building – papers by 13 Apr 2015
02 Jun 2015, 10:00, Boardroom, Faculty Building – papers by 18 May 2015
14 Jul 2015, 10:00, Boardroom, Faculty Building – papers by 29 Jun 2015

20.   <u>**RESERVED AREA OF BUSINESS**</u>
There were no items of reserved business.