

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Minutes from the meeting held on
Wednesday 29 September 2021

Present

David Ashton, Academic Registrar – Chair
Dr Clemens Brechtelsbauer, Chair of Programmes Committee
Dr Lorraine Craig, Faculty of Engineering representative
Professor Richard Green, Business School representative
Laura Lane, Head of Strategy and Operations, Graduate School
Daniel Lo, ICU Deputy President (Education)
Rebecca Middleton, Faculty of Natural Sciences representative
Claire Stapley, CLCC/CHERS representative
Professor Stephen Warren, College Consul representative
Judith Webster, Director of Academic Quality and Standards
Scott Tucker, Deputy Director (Academic Quality and Standards) – Secretary

In Attendance

Leila Guerra, Vice Dean (Education), Business School
David Parrott, Head of Admissions [Item 6]
Nancy Richards, Head of Curriculum Data Management

1. Welcome, apologies and announcements

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting, noting that no apologies for absence were received.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Professor Stephen Warren, replacing Professor Peter Openshaw, as the Committee's College Consul Representative.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 2.1 The Committee confirmed the minutes of 27 July 2021 as an accurate record. QAEC.2021.01

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1 No matters arising.

4. Update on QAEC actions

QAEC.2021.02

4.1 Degree classification algorithms / schemes of awards - Department of Aeronautics (QAEC 27 July, 5.1.1.v refers)

4.1.1 At the QAEC meeting held on 27 July 2021, the Committee considered a request from the Department of Aeronautics that their existing scheme of award was used for curriculum reviewed PGT programmes as follows:

- Distinction: The student has achieved a mark of 70.0% or greater for their taught modules' assessment aggregate AND a mark of 70.0% or greater for their project.
- Merit: The student has achieved a mark of 60.0% or greater for their taught modules' assessment aggregate AND a mark of 60.0% or greater for their project but either the taught modules' assessment aggregate or the project mark or both are below 70.0%
- Pass: The student has achieved a mark of 50.0% or greater for their taught modules' assessment aggregate AND a mark of 50.0% or greater for their project but either the taught modules' assessment aggregate or the project mark or both are below 60.0%.

As the proposed scheme of award was a shift from the 'Single Set' of Regulations, the Committee agreed that a number of factors were given further consideration before any programme specific variations to the regulations were approved. In addition, it was agreed that feedback should be sought from other Faculties to establish whether the proposal could be adopted for all PGT programmes across College that contained a dissertation or final major project that comprised 50% or more of the total ECTS.

4.1.2 It was confirmed that the Academic Registrar received feedback from the Faculty of Natural Sciences. The Faculty did not wish to adopt the proposed scheme of award and provided the following feedback:

- For a Master of Research degree, it was appropriate for the 'research' element(s) to carry significant weight (including in the determination of merit/distinction classifications)
- The case that the proposed scheme of award was targeting seemed unlikely to occur and might be better addressed by improving processes associated with marking and moderating research projects rather than requesting programme specific regulations
- Since the 'taught' element of an MRes would often be front-loaded in the earlier part of the academic year, it could potentially be demotivating for a student to know after, for example, one term that they could not achieve a distinction if they had not achieved an aggregate of 70% in their taught elements.

4.1.3 Although further feedback from other Faculties was being sought, it was evident that, at present, the proposal could not be adopted College wide. As a result, the Committee agreed to take a pragmatic approach and approve the variation to regulations for PGT programmes in Aeronautics only, as follows:

- MSc Advanced Aeronautical Engineering
- MSc Advanced Computational Methods for Aeronautics, Flow Management and Fluid-Structure Interaction
- MSc Composites: The Science, Technology and Engineering Application of Advanced Composites.

The scheme of award was approved for October 2021 intakes only, with a view that the Research and Policy Review Committee (RPRC) would further consider the academic rationale, working closely with Aeronautics and other Departments across the College, to reach a College agreement in good time for October 2022 delivery.

4.2 Degree classification algorithms / schemes of awards - Business School (QAEC 27 July, 5.1.1.vi refers)

4.2.1 At the QAEC meeting held on 27 July 2021, the Committee considered a request from the Business School that their degree classification would be based on a number of factors including: the average across module groups; a minimum threshold across the largest individual component marks in each module; a minimum threshold in examination components and coursework components; and a minimum threshold mark in the Foundations in Risk Management & Financial Engineering module. Committee members were unclear as to the academic rationale for the proposal and felt that a number of existing College regulations could cater for some of the components in the proposed scheme of award.

4.2.2 The Director of Academic Quality and Standards confirmed that a number of meetings had taken place to clarify further the academic rationale for the proposal. Following discussion, it was felt that a wider consultation was necessary in order fully explore any wider College implications.

4.2.3 The Committee agreed to take a pragmatic approach and approve the scheme of award for PGT programmes in the Business School, as follows:

- MSc Finance
- MSc Risk Management and Financial Engineering
- MSc Finance and Accounting
- MSc Investment and Wealth Management
- MSc Financial Technology

The scheme of award was approved for October 2021 intakes only, with a view that the Research and Policy Review Committee (RPRC) would further consider the academic rationale, working closely with the Business School and other Faculties and Departments across the College, to reach an agreement in good time for October 2022 delivery.

5. Terms of Reference, Composition and Membership

5.1 Update on QAEC terms of reference, composition and membership QAEC.2021.03

5.1.1 The Committee noted that a full review of the Committee's terms of reference, composition and membership would be carried out following the final part of the OfS Quality and Standards consultation. The review would ensure that the terms of reference for the new Education Committee and the Student Experience Committee would not duplicate those of QAEC. In addition, further work would be carried out over the next few months to redefine the College's Schedule of Delegation for Senate, to ensure that business was going through the academic governance branch where it needed to and to manage oversight of the College's compliance with the conditions of registration and responses to surveys, for example.

5.1.2 The Committee agreed that representation from the College's PGT community would be a valuable addition to QAEC. The membership would therefore be increased as appropriate.

Action: Secretary

5.2 Update on Sub Committees' terms of reference, composition and membership

5.2.1 The Committee noted that there were no significant changes to the terms of reference for the following subcommittees:

- Programmes Committee
- Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC)
- Regulations and Policy Review Committee (RPRC)
- Faculty Education Committee (FEC)

5.3 Update on College governance review

5.3.1 The Committee received an update on the College's governance review, noting that the Learning and Teaching Committee had been disbanded. It was further noted that additional sub-committees of Provost's Board had been established, as follows:

- Education Committee
- Research Committee
- Operations Committee

5.3.2 It was confirmed that the Faculty Education Managers would sit on the Student Lifecycle Administration Product Line Board to ensure that specialist advice and guidance was gathered formally through the new Governance structure.

5.3.3 It was clarified that the new Interdisciplinary Faculty Education Committee would be convened in addition to the four existing FECs.

6. Admissions Policies and Procedures QAEC.2021.04

6.1 Undergraduate Admissions Policy QAEC.2021.04.a

6.1.1 The Committee approved updates to the Undergraduate Admissions Policy, including the following:

- Removal of reference to 15 January deadline (now last Wednesday in January)
- Correction to Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing
- Additional clause under WP and Contextual admissions for College to reserve the right for an applicant to evidence declarations considered within contextual admissions.
- Academic requirements:
 - a) responsibility of an applicant to declare all relevant qualifications when applying and to ensure that their nominated referee provides predicted grades for any pending qualifications
 - b) firmer clause that where A levels were sat in the same subject in two boards in the same sitting that any grade requirement must be met in both boards for College to consider the requirement met
 - c) new section on Advanced Placements with clearer expectations and clauses
- Additional note that personal statements must be submitted via UCAS

6.1.2 The Committee agreed that section 4.1.1 should be updated as follows:

(4.1.1) The selection of undergraduate applications **normally** begins in October and continues until March when the final decisions are returned to UCAS.

6.2 Procedure for Dealing with Complaints by Applicants QAEC.2021.04.b

6.2.1 The Committee approved updates to the Procedure for Dealing with Complaints by Applicants, including the following:

- Removal of scope that an applicant might legitimately complain if they presented changed information or new information after an outcome had been processed. The College could only process an application on the basis of information provided by an applicant and that information was therefore the responsibility of the applicant

- Where an applicant provided changed or amended information after the College had processed an application, it should be at the discretion of the College as to whether the applicant was reconsidered, rather than that being guaranteed or within scope for a complaint.

6.3	Postgraduate Taught Admissions Policy	QAEC.2021.04.c
6.3.1	The Committee noted minor updates to the Postgraduate Taught Admissions Policy.	
6.4	Policy and Procedure for Admitting Students Under 18 Years of Age	QAEC.2021.04.d
6.4.1	The Committee noted minor updates to the Policy and Procedure for Admitting Students Under 18 Years of Age.	
6.5	Policy on the Admissions of Ex-Offenders	QAEC.2021.04.e
6.5.1	The Committee noted minor updates to the Policy on the Admissions of Ex-Offenders.	
6.6	Policy on the handling of DBS Certificate Information	QAEC.2021.04.f
6.6.1	The Committee noted minor updates to the Policy on the handling of DBS Certificate Information.	
6.7	Special Case Policy for PGT and PGR	QAEC.2021.04.g
6.7.1	The Committee noted minor updates to the Special Case Policy for PGT and PGR.	
6.8	Deferment Policy: Undergraduate	QAEC.2021.04.h
6.8.1	The Committee noted minor updates to the Deferment Policy: Undergraduate.	
6.9	Deferment Policy: Postgraduate	QAEC.2021.04.i
6.9.1	The Committee noted minor updates to the Deferment Policy: Postgraduate.	
7.	Regulations and Policy	
7.1	The Committee considered further updates to the Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure.	QAEC.2021.05

7.1.1 Following QAEC feedback on 29 July 2021, the following available penalties had been proposed:

- ‘Assessment is awarded zero, with re-submission required and capped at 20 percentage points below the pass mark (i.e., 20% for academic level 4-6, and 30% for academic level 7)’ (Outcome ‘e’)
- ‘Module is awarded zero, with resubmission as required by the Board of Examiners, capped at 20 percentage points below the pass mark (i.e., 20% for academic level 4-6, and 30% for academic level 7)’ (Outcome ‘g’).

7.1.2 The Committee noted the following feedback provided by the Faculty of Engineering:

- Page 69 – Viva Voce – if the investigator or the panel asked for a *viva voce* before making their decision this might cause delays
- Page 71 – more information could be provided at the start of the process, such as a cover sheet with the weighting of the assessment within the module, the module within the year, the student’s year in College, and first/second offence.
- Page 79 – why did all the penalties involve a resubmission component? There should be penalties available where there was just a cap on the grade without resubmission required. While resubmission was fine for coursework misconduct as this could be undertaken during term time, it was difficult from a department standpoint to implement the recommended outcomes for examination misconduct before the examination board, as the examinations were usually held just a few weeks before the Board. This meant that a student found guilty of examination misconduct would normally take the examination at the next available opportunity, which could delay progression. This was therefore a much more severe penalty than was likely intended. This also created more work for the individual who reported the misconduct as a new examination needed to be drafted.
- Overall, the policy was missing one of the major causes of misconduct cases last academic year, which was related to students plagiarising during open book exams; this fell under plagiarism although panels often felt this was an exam offence
- In the penalties, the new ‘e’ and ‘g’ had a cap of 20% on the mark. If this was a core module or a significant single piece of assessment, then these sanctions effectively prevented the student from progressing and might be harsher than intended.
- Penalty ‘g’ should have the same final clause as ‘h’.

7.1.3 The Committee agreed the following:

- Address the questions raised and update the policy as appropriate
- Remove the new ‘e’ and ‘g’ penalties (i.e. the 20% below threshold) until considered further

It was agreed that the final updates should be made to the document and recirculated to members, for approval by Chair’s action.

Action: Secretary

7.2 The use of Level 6 modules in PGT programmes

QAEC.2021.06

7.2.1 At the Senate meeting held on 16 June 2021, Senate approved QAEC’s recommendation that the Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study were revised to require that all postgraduate taught programmes contain level 7 modules only. It was agreed that any postgraduate taught programmes containing level 6 modules that had undergone curriculum review would need to be modified to ensure that only level 7 modules were delivered. To allow programme teams sufficient time to plan for the change, it was agreed that modifications should be approved for October 2022 delivery.

7.2.2 The Committee noted that there had been concerns raised via the Vice-Deans (Education) over the timing of the decision, the practical implications of the revision, and the feeling that this would reduce choice for students on programmes where Level 6 modules contributed to the elective offering.

7.2.3 The Committee recommended to Senate to defer implementation to allow for further consultation and consideration of the issues and the impact on postgraduate taught programmes.

7.2.4 This deferral would have no impact on programmes which only offered Level 7 modules. Should the deferral be approved by Senate, the Regulations and Policy Review Committee (RPRC) would be asked to take this work forward and present a further recommendation to either reverse the recommendation or to defer the implementation of the recommendation until October 2023, which would allow Departments additional time to make modifications to programmes and modules.

7.3 Updated Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure, and supporting guidance QAEC.2021.07

7.3.1 The Committee considered proposed updates to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure, and supporting guidance as follows:

- Updates to the ‘normally permitted’ and ‘normally not permitted’ list to align with the OIA good practice framework
- Update to the bereavement section to extend the 6-month automated period to one year, which was particularly welcomed by the Committee
- Additional section regarding pregnancy/maternity/paternity/adoption and fostering/religious observance/additional support needs identified through the MC process
- Updates to the section regarding supporting statements from personal tutors
- Update to chronic conditions/disability section

7.3.2 The Committee approved the updated Policy and procedure subject to a review of paragraphs 49-53 to reflect the wording of the College’s Religious Observance and Assessment Policy.

Action: Secretary

7.3.3 It was noted that further work would be carried out by RPRC relating to the mitigating circumstances relating to an assessment component that had been passed (current regulations mean that the student might not have another opportunity at the assessment component).

- 7.3.4** The Committee agreed that communication of the updated Policy and Procedure was important, and that College-wide wellbeing advisors and the Students' Union Advice Centre should be included. Departments should ensure information is cascaded to personal tutors.
- 7.4** Updated Authorised Interruption of Studies Procedure QAEC.2021.08
- 7.4.1** The Committee agreed to carry the item forward to the next meeting.
- 7.5** Updated Conducting Online Assessment Procedure QAEC.2021.09
- 7.5.1** The Committee approved minor updates to the procedure, subject to the following additions:
- Para 1.2 – Reference to Horizons TRAs in March
 - Para 2.1 – 'In 2021-22 all examinations ~~will~~ **may** be conducted as Open Book Timed Remote Assessments...'
- 7.5.2** It was confirmed that the College was not currently considering the use of online proctoring platforms.
- 7.6** Update on the [OfS quality and standards conditions consultation](#), which closed on 27 September 2021 QAEC.2021.10
- 7.6.1** It was noted that the College response would be circulated to members post-meeting.

Action: Secretary

8. Collaborative Provision

- 8.1** LKCMedicine Mid-Course Transfers 2022-23 Proposal QAEC.2021.11
- 8.1.2** The Committee noted that the Ministry of Education in Singapore had requested that LKCMedicine considered adapting its admissions procedures in order to accept mid-course transfer applications from 2022-23. Transfer students would only fill the small number of vacancies left by students who had withdrawn. It was proposed that LKC adopted this approach, ensuring that a series of parameters was put in place for these exceptional cases.
- 8.1.3** The Committee approved the proposal, noting that only transfers to the second or third year of the joint MBBS would be permitted and that transfer students would only be considered from a medical school recognised by the Singapore Medical Council.

9. Student Online Evaluation (SOLE)

- 9.1** Update on the replacement of Student Viewpoint for 2021-22: Timeline and Milestones QAEC.2021.12

9.1.1 At the meeting of QAEC held on 27 July 2021, it was reported that the SOLE replacement project team had a deadline of 2 August 2021 to decide on which supplier to proceed with or whether contingency options should be considered. Following an evaluation of user stories, the project team agreed to proceed with Qualtrics as the chosen supplier. Qualtrics was judged to be a more flexible and usable tool and met more of the specified requirements. The project team also considered a production (i.e. operational) integration between the identity management solution and Qualtrics. QAEC noted some of the areas that would be addressed over the next eight weeks of implementation.

9.2 UG SOLE Results Summer 2021 QAEC.2021.13

9.2.1 The Committee noted the UG SOLE results for the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Natural Sciences.

9.2.2 The Committee noted the UG SOLE results for the Faculty of Medicine – MBBS (Phase 1, Phase 2, Year 3,5,6) and MSc Medical Biosciences). QAEC.2021.14

9.3 SOLE dates and Surveys Calendar 2021-22 QAEC.2021.15

9.3.1 The Committee approved the following SOLE survey dates, subject to the successful implementation of Qualtrics:

Survey	Opening Date	Closing Date (UG)
Autumn SOLE	7 December 2021	5 January 2021
Spring SOLE	17 March 2022	21 April 2022
Summer SOLE	24 May 2022	21 June 2021

10. Sub-Committees: Programmes Committee

10.1 The Committee ratified the recommendations set out in the Programmes Committee report from the meeting held on 20 July 2021, which had been approved by Chair’s action. QAEC.2021.16

10.1.1 The following new programme proposals were approved, subject to recommendations:

- Centre of Environmental Policy
MSc Conservation Science and Practice
To introduce the above programme with effect from October 2022

10.1.2 The following curriculum review proposals were approved, subject to recommendations:

- Department of Earth Science and Engineering
MSc Geo-Energy with Machine Learning and Data Science (GEMS)
To introduce the redesigned programme above with effect from October 2022

- 10.2** The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the Programmes Committee report from the meeting held on 14 September 2021. QAEC.2021.17
- 11. Annual Monitoring** QAEC.2020.18
- 11.1** The Committee received updates from service providers in response to College level issues raised by Faculties through annual monitoring. The responses would be circulated to FECs for noting.
- Action: Secretary**
- 12. Education Strategy and Operations Group (ESOG)**
- 12.1** Report from ESOG - July-September 2021 QAEC.2020.19
- 12.1.1** The Committee received a report from ESOG, noting the following areas: Exceptional circumstances for remote study; Covid outbreak management plan; Contact tracing in teaching spaces; Admissions; Timetabling; Year-abroad fees; Guidance for field trips; Induction information for departments; Future education governance; OfS/CMA student experience template letter; Lone rooftop; and Management of student spaces.
- 13. Any other business**
- 13.1 Academic Integrity Charter**
- 13.1.1** The Committee noted that the College had signed up to the QAA Academic Integrity Charter. Signing up to the Charter represented an institutional pledge to implement its principles and commitments which included working with staff and students and, in collaboration across the sector, to protect and promote academic integrity, and take action against academic misconduct.
- 14. Dates of Meetings 2021-22**
- 14.1** The Committee confirmed the dates for QAEC meetings to be held in 2021-22 (all 10:10-12:00) as follows:
- Wednesday 17 November 2021 (for 8 December Senate)
 - Wednesday 26 January 2022 (for 23 March Senate)
 - Wednesday 2 March 2022 (also for 23 March Senate)
 - Wednesday 6 April 2022 (for 18 May Senate)
 - Wednesday 1 June 2022 (for 29 June Senate)