

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Minutes from the meeting held on
Wednesday 22 November 2023

Present

David Ashton, Academic Registrar – Chair
Dr Clemens Brechtelsbauer, Chair of Programmes Committee
Dr Lorraine Craig, Faculty of Engineering representative
Laura Lane, Head of Strategy and Operations, Graduate School
Prof Jonathan Mestel, Senior College Consul
Rebecca Middleton, Faculty of Natural Sciences representative
Prof Jason Riley, Faculty of Engineering representative
Claire Stapley, CLCC/CHERS representative
Dr Mike Tennant, Faculty of Natural Sciences representative
Karen Tweddle, Business School representative
Dr Jeffrey Vernon, Faculty of Medicine representative
Judith Webster, Director of Academic Quality and Standards
Yi Yang, ICU Deputy President (Education)
Scott Tucker, Deputy Director (Academic Quality and Standards) – Secretary

In Attendance

Bojan Cvijan, Senior Planning Officer, Strategic Planning Division [Item 6.1 - Analysis of NSS College Results]
Leila Guerra, Vice Dean (Education), Business School
Chris Kerr, Education and Quality Assurance Coordinator, Faculty of Natural Sciences

Apologies

Dr Cloda Jenkins, Business School representative
Martin Lupton, Faculty of Medicine representative
Jordon Millward, ICU PGR Representation Chair

1. Welcome, apologies and announcements

1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees. Apologies for absence were noted.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

2.1 The Committee confirmed the minutes of 20 September 2023 as an accurate record.

QAEC.2023.17

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 No matters arising.

- 4. Update on QAEC actions**
- 4.1 The Committee noted the updated action list. QAEC.2023.18
- 5. Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership of Subcommittees and Associated Committees**
- 5.1 The Committee approved minor updates to the Regulations and Policy Review Committee (RPRC) terms of reference, constitution and membership for 2023-24. QAEC.2023.19
- 5.2 The Committee approved minor updates to the Programmes Committee (RPRC) terms of reference and membership for 2023-24. QAEC.2023.20
- 5.3 The Committee approved minor updates to the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC) terms of reference and membership for 2023-24. QAEC.2023.21
- 5.4 The Committee noted the Admissions Subcommittee terms of reference, constitution and membership for 2023-24. QAEC.2023.22
- 6. Student Surveys**
- 6.1 National Student Survey (NSS) 2023 – Analysis of College Results** QAEC.2023.23
- 6.1.1 The Committee considered the National Student Survey (NSS) 2023 analysis of College Results, presented by Bojan Cvijan, Senior Planning Officer, Strategic Planning Division.
- 6.1.2 It was reported that the College performed well in the NSS 2023. It was in the top two quartiles for all but one of the question scales. The College’s strongest area of performance was in the ‘learning resources’ question scale however, it also performed well in the ‘mental wellbeing support services’ and ‘freedom of expression’ questions. The College was in the bottom quartile for ‘assessment and feedback’. The Committee noted that the Assessment and Feedback Working Group was exploring initiatives to enhance practices and improve scores in this NSS area. It was confirmed that the Working Group’s remit also covered postgraduate taught provision, as well as undergraduate provision.
- 6.1.3 The Committee acknowledged that curriculum review may not have resolved all assessment issues but the process did modernise a number of programmes, which now have a stronger foundation on which to further develop.
- 6.1.4 The Committee noted that the College’s full set of results are available to view via the [NSS dashboard](#). Access can be requested from the Strategic Planning Division.

6.2 National Student Survey (NSS) 2024 – Survey Options

QAEC.2023.24

6.2.1 The Committee recommended to the Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience) and ICU President, the following NSS options for 2024:

(i) Survey Start Week

- In line with previous surveys, it was recommended that the College launched at the earliest opportunity, in Week 1 (8 January 2024).
- In line with previous years, it was recommended that the Faculty of Medicine briefed its students in the first week of the New Year, during clinical placement briefings.

(ii) Optional Questions

- In line with the previous five surveys, it was recommended that the College included two optional banks of questions: B7 Course Delivery; and B9 Welfare Resources and Facilities. This would allow for comparability over multiple years.
- The statement ‘overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course’ was no longer core for English providers. The College added this as an option in 2023 but the Strategic Planning Division advised that this was no longer an appropriate metric and cannot be benchmarked with other providers. It was therefore recommended that the College did not include this as an additional question. As a proxy for overall satisfaction, and to enable like for like comparisons, an average of the scores of the 27 questions used in the survey would be calculated by Strategic Planning.

(iii) Incentives

- In line with previous surveys, it was recommended that the College did not offer incentives centrally. Students could be incentivised at a department level in non-cash forms.

6.2.2 *Post Meeting Note:*

The Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience) and ICU President approved the recommended NSS options for 2024.

6.3 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2022 – Analysis of College Results

QAEC.2023.25

6.3.1 The Committee noted the PTES 2022 – Analysis of College Results, produced by the Strategic Planning Division. Strategic Planning had now taken on the analysis of PTES, in line with the NSS. PTES 2022 results had previously been considered by QAEC, including through annual monitoring. It was agreed that a breakdown by programme was still required, which was being investigated as part of a previous QAEC action.

6.4 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2023 – Analysis of College Results

QAEC.2023.26

- 6.4.1 The Committee noted the PRES 2023 – Analysis of College Results, produced by the Strategic Planning Division. Results included a breakdown by faculty and department. The College results against sector benchmarks had previously been considered at QAEC.
- 6.4.2 The College performed well in most core themes, ranking in the top quartile in five of the nine core themes, in the second quartile in two, in the third quartile for Progression, and bottom quartile for Supervision. The College’s results are higher or equal to the average scores for the Sector, the Russell Group, and London institutions across all question categories, except for ‘Supervision’ and ‘Progression’, where the College’s scores fall below the averages for all three of these benchmark groups. These specific areas have therefore been identified within this report as evident areas in need of improvement.
- 6.4.3 It was acknowledged that PhD students who do not start in October may be more likely to experience challenges due to missing the main induction. It was confirmed that the Graduate School was developing a non-October induction to support students.
- 6.4.4 Departments would be sent department results and a PRES action plan template by the Quality Assurance Team, for consideration by the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC) in May 2024, as previously agreed at QAEC (20 September 2023, minute 7.1.4).

7. Posthumous and Aegrotat Research Degrees

- 7.1 The Committee considered Procedural Guidance for the Policy for the Award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Research Degrees. QAEC.2023.27

The guidance elaborated on the previously approved Policy and provided further information for staff with reference to the following areas:

- Compiling evidence for consideration of award
- GDPR, Copyright, Intellectual Property (IP) rights
- Publication and further research
- Certification and graduation

- 7.1.1 The Committee welcomed the additional guidance and approved for publication.

Action: Secretary

8. Guidance on the issue of official documentation and replacement documentation

- 8.1 The Committee considered the guidance document, presented by Mara Arts (Deputy Director of Student Administration), noting that this would supersede the *Regulations for the Replacement of Lost or Damaged Diplomas*. It was noted that the guidance would ensure that the process for the issue of *all* forms of confirmation of studies (diplomas, transcripts or official letters) would be clearly articulated to students and alumni, including where such documents were produced by the University of London. QAEC.2023.28
- 8.2 It was confirmed that any replacement documents would be marked as ‘duplicate’.

8.3 The Committee approved the guidance document, subject to clarification on whether any distinction was required between taught and research students.

Action: Secretary

9. Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Rates of Pay

9.1 Final Report from the Working Group Established to Review GTA Rates of Pay

QAEC.2023.29

9.2 In response to concerns raised by students with respect to variation in rates of pay for similar activities carried out by GTAs, the Graduate School was asked to establish a Working Group to review GTA rates of pay across College and provide departments with guidance on the application of rates of pay for GTA activities. QAEC considered the Final Report from the Working Group Established to Review GTA Rates of Pay, which had been considered at the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC) on 25 October 2023.

9.3 It was noted that extensive Department consultation had taken place, which was incorporated into the following key documents:

- Engaging and Working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (which, subject to approval, would replace the existing GTA Framework)
- Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Activities, Remuneration and Training (which, subject to approval, would replace the existing GTA Roles and Responsibilities document)

9.4 The Committee endorsed the documents in principle but agreed that due to the resource implications of the proposed 'GTA Activities and Pay Tiers', that the financials were considered by the Education and Student Experience Committee, should the Chair of the Committee deem that appropriate.

9.5 Subject to approval of the Education and Student Experience Committee, if appropriate, the GTA website and casual worker website would be redeveloped for October 2024 implementation. Updates on any operational guidance would also be shared by the Graduate School with departments prior to launch.

9.6 *Post Meeting Note:*

The Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience) agreed that the item would be discussed at the Education and Student Experience Committee in January 2024. Outcome to be reported to QAEC in due course.

Action: Secretary

10. Sub-Committees

10.1 Regulations and Policy Review Committee

10.1.1 Report from the RPRC meeting held on 1 November 2023

QAEC.2023.30

QAEC considered the report from the RPRC meeting held on 1 November 2023 and approved the following:

- (i) Recommendation to rescind the *Request for dispensation from anonymity at exam board policy* and the *Policy for the preparation of model answers* as these are now covered by the *Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study*.
- (ii) Updated Instructions for Candidates document. In addition, the RPRC report highlighted that the College did not have agreed procedures for all forms of examination and that this would be developed and presented to RPRC in due course.
- (iii) Updated Duties of Invigilator document
- (iv) Conducting Digital Assessments procedure, subject to minor amendments (including those communicated by the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) pre-meeting).

QAEC noted the following items discussed by RPRC:

- (v) Physics proposal to de-weight year one
 - RPRC agreed that the proposal required further development and consultation.
- (vi) Borderline provision for PGT programmes
 - The Quality Assurance Team would circulate a survey to consult with relevant staff as to whether the College should continue with borderline provisions for new entrants from academic year 2024-25 onwards, with a view to making a recommendation to QAEC in Spring 2024.

10.2 Programmes Committee

10.2.1 Report from the Programmes Committee meeting held on 26 October 2023

QAEC.2023.31

QAEC considered the report from the Programmes Committee meeting held on 26 October 2023 and approved the following new programmes, subject to a satisfactory response to the recommendations:

- (i) Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
 - MSc AI Applications and Innovation for October 2024 delivery
- (ii) Dyson School of Design Engineering
 - MSc Cleantech Innovation for October 2024 delivery

10.2.2 It was reported by the Chair of Programmes Committee that the workload of committee remained high as a result of late modification submissions.

The Committee agreed that a review of the College's *Programme and Module Modification Procedure* should be conducted to ensure that the deadlines and information required are still fit for purpose. It was agreed that this should be followed up by staff development and updated guidance documentation.

Action: Secretary

10.2.3 It was noted that the College still experienced challenges with version control of module specifications. It was agreed that the process of updating module specifications should be reviewed, ensuring that clear lines of responsibility and ownership are clarified.

Action: Secretary

10.3 Postgraduate Research Quality Committee

10.3.1 Report from the PRQC meeting held on 25 October 2023

QAEC.2023.32

QAEC considered the report from the PRQC Committee meeting held on 25 October 2023 and approved the following:

(i) PRQC Terms of Reference (see QAEC Item 5.3)

(ii) Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Rates of Pay (see QAEC item 9)

(iii) Research Degree Precept 1

- Updated to reflect the recommendation that this precept required departments to consider recruitment mechanisms to support EDI work.
- Updated to remove the implied reliance on the Director of Postgraduate Studies to act as the second interviewer in selection interviews and clarify that other positions could perform this role.

QAEC noted the following:

(iv) ESA and LSR forms

- Updated to clarify that *Mutual Expectations for the Research Degree Student Supervisor Partnership* document should be re-visited over the course of the degree in addition to the requirement to discuss in the first three months.

(v) Modality of Vivas Policy

- Updated to permit travel carbon emissions as a potential consideration for requesting a remote or hybrid viva.

(vi) PGR Periodic Review of Department of Computing report

(vii) PGR Periodic Review of Department of Mechanical Engineering 12-month update

11. Admissions

11.1 Proposed changes to UG Entry Requirements 2025

QAEC.2023.33

11.1.1 The Committee approved the following updates to undergraduate entry requirements for 2025 entry:

(i) The introduction of the Engineering and Science Admissions Test (ESAT) as an admissions requirement for courses in the following departments:

- Aeronautics
- Chemical Engineering
- Civil & Environmental Engineering
- Dyson School of Design Engineering
- Electrical & Electronic Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Physics

(ii) The introduction of the Test of Mathematics for Undergraduate Admission (TMUA) as an admissions requirement for courses in the following departments:

- Computing (including Joint Mathematics & Computing)
- Imperial College Business School

(iii) The introduction of the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) as an admissions requirement for undergraduate Medicine, to replace the discontinued BMAT test.

(iv) Entry requirements for the Medicine Graduate Entry course, stipulating the Graduate Medical School Admissions Test (GAMSAT) and a degree in Bioscience or Allied Healthcare with Upper Second Class Honours or better.

(v) The addition of the following International Foundation Programmes for admission to courses in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering:

- University College London UPSCE 80% overall with 80% in Mathematics and 80% in Physics
- University of Warwick International Foundation Programme 80% overall in the Engineering Pathway with 80% in Mathematics and 80% in Physics

It was noted that these programmes were already accepted for admission to other departments within the Faculty of Engineering.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 No other business reported.

13. Dates of QAEC Meetings 2023-24

13.1 The Committee noted the following dates of the QAEC meetings to be held in 2023-24:

- Wednesday 7 February 2024
- Wednesday 13 March 2024
- Wednesday 10 April 2024
- Wednesday 5 June 2024