

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Minutes from the meeting held on
Wednesday 24 February 2021

Present

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

In Attendance

Adrian Hawksworth, Assistant Registrar (Placements) [Item 9]
Leila Guerra, Vice Dean (Education), Business School
Professor Omar Matar, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Professor Emma McCoy, Interim Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience)
Professor Richard Thompson, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences

Apologies

Professor Peter Openshaw, Senior Consul
Zixiau Wang, GSU President

1. Welcome, apologies and announcements

1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting, noting apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

QAEC.2020.50

2.1 The Committee confirmed the minutes of 20 January 2021 as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 *Programme and Module Modifications (3.1 refers)*

3.1.1 The Committee noted that the deadline for communicating in-session temporary minor and major modifications as a result of Covid-19 was extended to 31 March 2021 to allow Departments further time for consideration. Confirmation of the extended deadline and supporting guidance has been communicated to Departments by the QA Team.

4. Update on Committee actions

QAEC.2020.51

4.1 The Committee received the action list, noting that progress against each action had been reviewed and updated since the previous meeting.

4.2 *Lecturer and module evaluation review for 2020-21 implementation (Action September 2017, 16.1.2 refers)*

4.2.1 ICT has been consulting stakeholders across College to gather feedback on lecturer and module evaluation survey requirements. The scoping exercise was being conducted as a means to replace Student Viewpoint (the platform used to administer SOLE) from Autumn 2021, including the functionality for students to be able to evaluate individual lecturers. It was reported that the majority of other institutions across the sector do not ask students to provide feedback on individual lecturers through an equivalent survey but that this practice was currently linked to the College's academic promotions process.

4.2.2 Dr Camille Kandiko Howson (Associate Professor of Education) and Dr Helen Walkey (Education Insight and Evaluation Analyst) are coordinating module evaluation pilots this academic year, under the auspices of the Ed Tech Guild Data Analytics Evaluation and Monitoring Group. The Committee noted the following:

- Module evaluation pilots would run alongside SOLE this Spring term (from 16 March 2021)
- Four departments would take part in the pilots: Aeronautics, Chemistry, Mechanical Engineering and Physics
- The platform for data collection would be Qualtrics
- Unlike SOLE, the pilots would not ask students to evaluate individual lecturers, only the teaching on the module as a whole
- Feedback was being collected on proposed core questions and optional banks of themed questions
- ICA reports (Banner data) would be used as the data source for student module enrolment and module data

4.2.2 It was noted that the pilot module evaluations were being conducted across departments delivering programmes with similar structures. The Faculty of Medicine representative highlighted that any future survey must be suitable for the College's wide range of provision, including the MBBS programme. Any recommendations from the pilots would therefore need to be considered in the context of the wider College. It was confirmed that the Head of School of Medicine Secretariat was a member of the working group led by ICT, that was undertaking a scoping exercise in order to establish requirements for a platform to replace Student Viewpoint. The Faculty of Medicine requirements are therefore being collected via this group.

4.2.3 The Committee supported the work that was being undertaken and highlighted the importance of continued College consultation.

4.3 *Update on data requirements for Spring and Summer SOLE 2020 (Action 18 November 2020, 7.3 refers)*

4.3.1 On 18 November 2020, the Committee agreed that '...for Spring and Summer SOLE 2020, further exploration would be carried out to ascertain whether there was a technical solution to use Banner data for SOLE. It was highlighted that Banner can report on many of the required SOLE fields but that, whilst SOLE remains both a module and lecturer evaluation survey, Banner does not capture the required staff data for each module (often taught by multiple staff). This data was still held at departmental level.' Following discussions between the QA Team, Student Administration teams and ICT, it was agreed that the use of Banner data for Spring and Summer SOLE 2020 would require significant manipulation yet still place a burden on Departments to provide further data. As was noted by the Committee in November, key information required for SOLE was not held in Banner, including lecturer information and module end dates. In addition, the Faculty of Engineering reported that some Departments are still resolving module enrolment data quality issues. Given the work being undertaken by the College on a replacement SOLE (see 4.2) it was also reported that the significant administrative and technical work required to use Banner data for SOLE at this stage was not proportionate given that the current iteration of SOLE would only run for two more terms on the current platform.

The QA Team, who manages the administration of the survey, proposed that the most pragmatic way forward to ensure Spring and Summer SOLE run to schedule was for Departments to have the flexibility to submit data via DSS, the College Excel template or a department Excel template. This means that no significant additional work needs to be undertaken by Departments as existing data sets would be used. Where Departments use a department Excel template, this must include: programme code; module code; module name; year, staff CID; staff name; and UG/PG. The QA Team would then undertake significant work to ensure that Department data was manipulated into the correct format for Student Viewpoint. This was a short-term solution as it would place significant burden on the QA Team. The Committee noted that a delay in department data submission or significant issues with data quality may result in the need to delay Spring SOLE, which was scheduled to go live on Tuesday 16 March.

4.3.2 The Committee agreed this approach in principle, subject to agreement from Faculty Education Managers, which the QA Team would contact.

Action: Secretary

4.3.3 CLCC and the Business School have confirmed that data for Horizons and BPES modules would be provided using existing processes.

5. Student Online Evaluation (SOLE) Results

QAEC.2020.52

5.1 The Committee considered the UG and PG Autumn SOLE 2020 results for Engineering and Natural Sciences. The SOLE results for Medicine had not been received at the time the paper was drafted and would be considered at the next QAEC.

It was noted that current systems issues with Student Viewpoint were affecting the ability to extract CLCC results in certain formats. The issue was currently being investigated.

Action: Secretary

5.2 Autumn SOLE opened on 3 December 2020 (the School of Public Health did not participate in this year's PG SOLE). By student request and due to low participation rates, the Committee agreed to extend the survey completion deadline for Autumn SOLE until 11 January 2021 (UG) and 12 January 2021 (PG).

5.3 The Committee noted the following response rate data:

- Final response rates: UG overall 36% (-2% on 2019), PG overall 40% (+8% on 2019)
- Highest response rates (UG): Earth Science (69%), Chemical Engineering (65%), Life Sciences (40%)
- Highest response rates (PG): Chemical Engineering (84%), EEE (64%), Civil Engineering / SEF (57%)

5.4 The Committee noted the following module evaluation results:

UG

- At College level, the question 'overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the module' received 81%, an increase of 4 percentage points from the previous year.
- At College level, the question 'I have received helpful feedback on my work' continues to receive the lowest satisfaction score (73%), which was consistent with the past two academic years (2019/20: 71%, 2018/2019: 72%). Both Engineering (72%) and Natural Sciences (75%) received similar satisfaction scores for this question.

PG

- At College level, the question 'overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the module' received 84%, an increase of 5 percentage points from the previous year.
- At College level, the question 'I have received helpful feedback on my work' continues to receive the lowest satisfaction score (79%), which was consistent with

the past two academic years (2019/20: 76%, 2018/2019: 77%). Both Engineering (80%) and Natural Sciences (77%) received similar satisfaction scores for this question.

5.5 The Committee noted the modest increases in overall satisfaction and welcomed the results, given the challenging circumstances due to Covid-19.

6. **Student Casework – Postgraduate Research**

QAEC.2020.53

6.1 The Committee considered the PGR Student Casework report. The limited data available for analysis made proposing recommendations for any changes to processes and procedures difficult, beyond that which have been put in place in individual departments where a case has identified a specific action(s). It was recommended in the report that data was collated over a longer period, which would gradually become available as record keeping improves. Additional years would continue to be added until there was a 5-year trend.

6.2 It was noted that the updated procedure for appeals would be reviewed in due course to ensure that it meets the expectations of the College in this area.

7. **Programmes Committee**

QAEC.2020.54

7.1 The Committee received the report on the Programmes Committee meeting held on 26 January 2021.

7.2 The Committee approved the following redesigned programme as part of Curriculum Review:

Business School

Global Online MBA

- To introduce the above programme with effect from September 2021

Faculty of Medicine

MSc Patient Safety

- To introduce the above programme with effect from October 2021
- To replace the on-campus programme with a fully online version with effect from October 2021.

7.3 The Committee ratified the following major modifications:

Faculty of Engineering

Department of Materials

JFM2 Materials Science and Engineering - 4-year MEng

BJ95 Biomaterials and Tissue Engineering - 4-year MEng

J5H8 Materials with Nuclear Engineering - 4-year MEng

JF52 Materials Science and Engineering - 3-year BEng

J5N2 Materials with Management - 3-year BEng

- To make changes to two learning outcomes for module MATE50001 'Mathematics and Computing II' with effect from October 2021.

Department of Bioengineering

MEng & BEng Molecular Bioengineering

- To make changes to the assessment structure of module 'BIOE50009 - Molecules, Materials and Measurement 2' for one academic year with effect from October 2020.

MSc Biomedical Engineering

- To make changes to the assessment structure of module 'BIOE97057 - Engineering in Cancer Therapy' for one academic year with effect from October 2020.

Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering

MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering

MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering with Management

MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering with a Year Abroad

MEng Electrical and Information Engineering

MEng Electronic and Information Engineering with a Year Abroad

- To suspend the module 'ELEC97046 Human Centred Robotics' for one academic year with effect from October 2020.

MSc Engineering Fluid Mechanics for the Offshore Coastal and Built Environments

- To make changes to the assessment structure of the module 'CIVE96016 - Fluid Mechanics Fundamentals' with effect from October 2020.

Faculty of Medicine

LKCMedicine (Nanyang Technological University)

MBBS

- To introduce a new longitudinal course, Digital Health – Digital Technologies in Health and Healthcare with effect from October 2020.

7.4 The Committee considered the following proposed major modification:

Department of Chemical Engineering

Chemical Engineering (Occasional FT Programme)

- To request an exception to the College's Academic Regulations - module credit size for students enrolled on the occasional (exchange) programmes with effect from October 2020 (retrospective).

7.4.1 The Committee did not approve the proposal as it was felt that further discussion should take place at the Regulations and Policy Review Committee (RPRC) and the Study Abroad Task and Finish Group with a view to agreeing a College wide approach for 2021-22. The Committee agreed that appropriate oversight was required as the College was awarding ECTS, however, it was acknowledged that a solution must be sought in order to maintain such arrangements.

7.4.2 The Committee agreed that existing occasional students already enrolled on modules this academic year would continue with their agreed module study plans as set out at the point of module enrolment. Upon successful completion of the relevant module components, occasional students would be awarded ECTS as ratified at the Board of Examiners. The Committee agreed a suspension of the academic regulations this academic year to allow ECTS awarded to occasional students to fall outside the College's module credit framework. As a result, existing students would not be disadvantaged and only complete the prescribed module assessment components, as set out by the Department. The Department of Chemical Engineering would be asked to contact the Curriculum Data Management Team to ensure appropriate arrangements are made this academic year, to accommodate the award of non-standard ECTS values.

Action: Secretary

7.5 The Committee considered the following new programme proposal:

QAEC.2020.55

Business School

MRes in Business

- 2 years, full-time with effect from September 2021
- With a request for an exception to the College's Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study to allow for a full-time programme duration of two-years and a total credit value of 135 ECTS

7.5.1 The Committee noted that, as recommended by the Programmes Committee, a Working Group had been initiated and convened on 16 February 2021 to support programme development. The Committee considered the following rationale for the proposed programme falling outside the College's Regulations in terms of length (2 years) and total ECTS (135):

- The MRes was in part a pre-requisite for a PhD as well as a research orientated Masters programme. Although the Business School PhD intake was modest (entry of around 15 students per annum across 4 disciplines). Postgraduate research students are vital to the research culture and environment of the School. College Business School was one of the most research-intensive schools in Europe and maintaining this position requires a healthy PhD programme
- Completion of a PhD to international standards in the social sciences requires that students acquire a strong taught foundation which provides both breadth and depth of knowledge in their disciplines; this cannot be gained in a one-year taught MRes programme

- Currently in the social sciences sector, it is not standard practice to undertake a postdoctoral placement following PhD completion. Job market candidates would typically enter employment as assistant professors. In order to succeed, it is necessary for candidates to have acquired the appropriate level of knowledge within their discipline
- The one-year MRes of 90 ECTS does not provide sufficient coursework to equip PhDs to complete in 4 years to an international standard. This means that many of the Business School's students have applied for extensions in order to complete the PhD
- It is difficult to judge a student's ability to complete a PhD based on the 3-month research project that can be accommodated within a one-year MRes. Students who are unsuitable may thus be accepted and subsequently struggle to complete the PhD
- The two-year MRes model is increasingly the standard in the UK and Europe in the disciplines offered in the Business School and several of the Business School's leading competitors have recently introduced two-year MRes programmes with similar structures to the programme proposed. In the USA, the taught component of the PhD programme was even longer, with up to 3 years assessed coursework.
- The Business School's current one year 90 ECTS programme was not attracting students of the quality expected, given the calibre of the faculty and their research-intensive culture
- The design of 135 ECTS was based on the need for sufficient taught module work plus a research project of suitable length to judge a student's ability to successfully complete a PhD. This research project can then feed into the student's research that would form part of their PhD. The research project that can be completed in a one-year MRes was not sufficiently in-depth to generally allow this.

7.5.2 The Committee approved the programme subject to the following conditions:

- That the work students are required to undertake over the summer term in year one was recognised, and that the learning hours are formally represented as a credit-bearing module.
- That the workload for the Research Project module in year two was more accurately represented in terms of ECTS, with a recommendation that this module was 60 ECTS.
- That the total ECTS for the programme was revised, to reflect the required workload more accurately, with a view to making the programme 180 ECTS.

Should the conditions be met, the programme would be approved by Chair's action.

Action: Secretary

8. College Covid-19 Update

QAEC.2020.56

8.1 Following previous updates to Senate in June, October and December 2020, the paper set out the continuing response made by College to Covid-19 in respect of the need to assure the academic quality and standards of the College's provision whilst supporting students. The Committee noted the following key sections of the report:

- Impact of National Lockdown and Spring Term Arrangements
- Student Attendance on Campus
- Approach to Fair Assessment
- Admissions
- Student Experience
- Support for PGR Students
- Financial Support
- International Student Support
- Timetabling
- Review of Student Support Over the Christmas Vacation
- Collaboration

The Chair and the Interim Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience) thanked colleagues across the College on the collaborative work undertaken in response to Covid-19.

9. Erasmus, Swiss-European Mobility Programme and the Turing Scheme

QAEC.2020.57

9.1 The Committee received an update from the Assistant Registrar (Placements) on behalf of Registry and the International Relations Office on the subject of the [UK Government's Turing scheme](#). Insight into the scope and priorities of the scheme, and how the College might tentatively view participation, were provided. The relevance to the College's Access and Participation Plan was noted, and that it marked an opportunity to reflect on mobility as part of the student offering. It was noted that the Programme Guide was yet to be published but preliminary discussions were taking place between key stakeholders. Registry and the International Relations Office would consult with the Interim Vice Provost (Education and Student Experience) and the Vice-President (International)/Associate Provost (Academic Partnerships) about the next steps. Any application the College might pursue would be made in March-April with results known in July 2021.

10. Postgraduate Research Quality Committee

QAEC.2020.58

10.1 Submission of PhD theses via Turnitin process map

In 2019, it was agreed that Turnitin would be used for the ESA and thesis submission milestones. The use of Turnitin at ESA had been implemented for students starting from September 2019.

10.1.1 The Committee noted that further consultation would be carried out regarding the operation of Turnitin for thesis submission. Once feedback had been received from DPSs and PGR administrators, it was hoped a final process would be agreed by the end of March 2020. This would allow time for guidance to be produced to support staff and students before this was implemented for the 2021-22 academic year.

10.2 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey update

At the previous meeting, the Committee agreed the PRES 2021 window and asked PRQC to consider the use of optional survey questions.

10.2.1 The Committee agreed the following PRQC recommendations:

- That the College would use the optional Covid related questions for PRES 2021
- That, following the withdrawal by AdvanceHE of the questions related to wellbeing from the core question set, the College would use institution-specific questions to gather feedback in this area. The wellbeing questions previously used by AdvanceHE were not deemed appropriate and as a result, the College would devise new institution-specific questions under the remit of the ESOG Student Experience subgroup. Institution-specific questions must be communicated to the QA Team by 19 March at the latest, in order for the survey to open on 22 April 2021.

11. Any other business

11.1 No other business was reported.

12. Dates of Meetings 2020-21

The Committee noted the dates of remaining meetings to be held in 2020-21 (all 10:10-12:00):

- Wednesday 28 April 2021
- Wednesday 26 May 2021