Imperial College London

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Confirmed Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 19th January 2016

Present
Professor Sue Gibson, Vice Provost (Education) - Chair
Professor Tony Magee, Deputy Director of the Graduate School
Professor Myra McClure, Senior College Consul
Dr Edgar Meyer, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programmes, Business School
Dr Phil Power, Education Manager, Faculty of Engineering
Professor Alan Spivey, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences
Mr Chun-Yin San, Imperial College Union, Deputy President (Education) from item 11 to end
Ms Judith Webster, Head of Academic Services
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement) - Secretary

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

Apologies:
Professor Peter Cheung, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Dr Lorraine Craig, Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, Faculty of Engineering
Mr Liucheng Guo, Graduate Students' Union President
Professor Emma McCoy, Chair of the Programmes Committee
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.   Apologies as listed above
         were noted. It was noted that due to changes in the Faculty of Medicine
         governance structure a new representative from the Faculty would be
         replacing Professor Sue Smith at future meetings.

2.   **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**   QAEC.2015.15
         The unconfirmed minutes from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement   QAEC.2015.15a
         Committee (QAEC) held on Tuesday 10th November 2015 were approved.
         The Committee also noted upcoming Committee actions.

3.   **Matters arising from the Minutes**
         There were no matters arising.

4.   **Academic Standards Framework**
         Professor Gibson provided a verbal update on the Academic Standards
         Framework. It was noted that a new committee structure had come into
         effect from 1st January 2016 and that the Assessment and Complaints &
         Appeals Task and Finish Groups were now underway.   It was further noted
         that the ASF Steering Group would be discussing module size at their
         meeting on 26th January 2016.

5.   **Request from Faculty of Medicine for Sample Second Marking**   QAEC.2015.16*
It was noted that this proposal would now be considered at the March 2016 meeting of the Committee.

6.   **Suspension of the Pre-Sessional English Courses for Business School programmes**   QAEC.2015.17
The Committee considered a proposal from the Business School to suspend their pre-sessional English programme for one to two years with immediate effect.

6.1   The Committee heard that the Business School had run their own pre-sessional English programme for a number of years but that they now felt that the programme was no longer meeting their objectives and as a result they wished to remove attendance of the pre-sessional English programme as an entry route to meeting the Business School's English requirements of IELTS 7 overall with 6.5 in all elements (or equivalent). It was clarified that the Business School were also proposing that attendance of the College's pre-sessional English programme, delivered by the Centre for Academic English, should no longer be an acceptable route through which to meet the Business School's English entry requirement.

6.2   It was further clarified that the Business School would still make conditional offers for English language attainment but that the condition could only be met through testing by an approved test centre.

6.3   It was explained that prospective students could still attend the College's own pre-sessional English programme if they wished but this would only be the purposes of orientation/settling.

6.4   It was further explained that the Business School were asking for a suspension for 1-2 years and they would keep the situation under review before making a decision whether to withdraw the programme altogether or re-instate it.

6.5   Dr Meyer confirmed that the pre-sessional English programmes had not been offered to applicants for the 2016-7 session or advertised on their website since November 2015.

6.6   The Committee were satisfied that the Business School had satisfactorily considered the implications of their proposal and agreed to report the suspension to Senate.

7.   **Progression Arrangements**   QAEC.2015.18
The Committee considered whether the College should enter into progression arrangements with other institutions and, if so, whether a formal process should be developed.

7.1   Overall, the Committee were not supportive of progression arrangements. It was further agreed that their preference would be for individual applications to be considered on their individual merits. The Committee therefore agreed to re-visit the existing policy for considering special cases

for admission to ensure it continued to be fit for purpose and requested a paper on this for the next meeting.

Action: Admissions and QA Teams

8.   Periodic Reviews: Follow up

It was noted that QAEC had considered the following periodic reviews during the 2014-5 academic session and that, as part of the outcome of those discussions, departments had been asked to report back to QAEC in a year's time on their progress in meeting the recommendations in the reviews.

8.1   Department of Mechanical Engineering – UG Periodic Review 2013-4   QAEC.2015.19

The Committee considered the follow up report from the UG periodic review of Mechanical Engineering.

8.1.1   The Committee noted that the Department were carrying out their own review of their programmes in which they were actively considering the recommendations made as part of the periodic review.

8.1.2   The Committee were satisfied with the Department's response but were interested to hear more with regards to timetabling and reducing scheduling conflicts (recommendation 2). It was noted that the Faculty of Engineering were recruiting a post to take forward a timetabling project. It was therefore requested that the Department should report back to the Committee on progress in this area in the autumn term 2016.

Action: Dr M J Bluck, Dept of Mechanical Engineering

8.2   Department of Life Sciences – UG Periodic Review 2013-4   QAEC.2015.20

The Committee considered the follow up report from the UG periodic review of the Department of Life Sciences.

8.2.1   The Committee also heard a supporting commentary from Professor Spivey and were confident that the recommendations in the report had either been addressed or were in the process of being addressed. In particular, the Committee were pleased to learn that much work had taken place to improve feedback on assessment to students and the recording of lectures.

8.3   Department of Aeronautics – PGT Periodic Review 2013-4   QAEC.2015.21

The Committee considered the follow up report from the PGT Periodic Review of the Department of Aeronautics.

8.3.1   The Committee noted that the recommendation regarding moderation would now be addressed as part of the Academic Standards Framework project.

8.3.2   The Committee were satisfied that all other recommendations had been satisfactorily addressed.

8.4   Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication [previously known as   QAEC.2015.22*
Centre for Co-Curricular Studies] - UG Periodic Review 2013-4

It was noted that this report would now be considered at the March 2016

meeting of the Committee.

8.5 **School for Professional Development (SPD) – PG Teaching Periodic Review 2013-4**   QAEC.2015.23

The Committee considered the follow up report from the PG Teaching Periodic Review of SPD.

8.5.1 The Committee were satisfied that the recommendations had been satisfactorily addressed.

8.6 **School for Public Health PG Teaching Periodic Review 2013-4**   QAEC.2015.24*

It was noted that this report would now be considered at the March 2016 meeting of the Committee.

8.7 **Department of Computing – UG Periodic Review 2013-4**   QAEC.2015.25*

It was noted that this report would now be considered at the March 2016 meeting of the Committee.

9. **Short Courses Quality Committee**   QAEC.2015.26

The Committee noted the confirmed minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 17th December 2016. It was further noted that this had been the final meeting of the Committee as, under the new governance structure, the Committee's responsibilities had been transferred to the new Programmes Committee which would meet for the first time on 21st January 2016.

10. **Chair's Action**   QAEC.2015.27

The Committee noted a report from the Chair regarding action taken on behalf of the Committee since the last meeting. This included the suspension of taught programme periodic review for 2015-6 and 2016-7 as during the Academic Standards Framework implementation period and the setting of the PTES survey dates as Thursday 19th May – Thursday 16th June 2016.

11. **Surveys: PRES/PTES**

11.1 **Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2015**

11.1.1 The Committee considered the PRES 2015 benchmarking data.   QAEC.2015.28

**11.1.1
.2** It was noted that the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC) had been receiving the departmental action plans for PRES and that a summary report of these would be considered at the next meeting.

**11.1.1
.3** The Committee noted that it was College strategy to be in the top quartile of relevant national surveys. It was noted that the World Class Supervision Working Party would be reporting to the Provost's Board shortly.

11.1.2 The Committee considered a preview of the ICU response to the PRES 2015 results.   QAEC.2015.29

**11.1.2
.1**   Mr San explained that the response focused on three main areas:
- Providing safety nets to world-class supervision
- Building a safe and professional work environment
- Growing our students and fostering vibrant communities

and that the report contained a number of recommendations which would be core to the ICU's postgraduate strategy.

**11.1.2
.2**   It was further explained that the ICU were shortly to launch a campaign focusing on supervisors and that the ICU were keen to work closely with the World Class Supervision Working Party in enhancing the experience of researchers.

11.1.3   The Committee considered the [PRES 2015 HEA National Report: The Research Student Journey](#).

**11.1.3
.1**   It was noted that as, as in previous years, nationally general satisfaction is very high. The vast majority of research students (82%) agreed with the statement that they are satisfied with their experience of their research degree.

**11.1.3
.2**   It was noted that, also as in previous years, supervision had been rated the highest while the research culture had been rated the lowest nationally.

11.2   Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

11.2.1   The Committee considered a report produced by the HEA: "[What do taught postgraduates want?](#)"

**11.2.1
.1**   It was noted that the report looked in detail at the motivations and experience of taught postgraduate students and that overall, the national findings were that taught postgraduates have a positive learning experience, but that some struggle with workload and inconsistent teaching.

**11.2.1
.2**   The report found that taught postgraduates were positive about their experience, with 82% of respondents giving a positive rating across their learning experience and 79% rating engagement positively. It was noted that these figures were consistent with the previous year's results.

**11.2.1
.3**   The HEA research also indicated that a good fit between what students wanted from their programme and what the programme delivered resulted in a positive experience. Both statistical analysis and analysis of student comments found that unmanageable workload harms the overall student experience and the quality of their learning.

11.2.2   The Committee considered "[In Their Own Words: Analysing students' comments from the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey](#)" a report by Elena Zaitseva and Claire Milsom from Liverpool John Moores University.

**11.2.2
.1**   It was noted that the authors had analysed the equivalent of 4,500 pages of comments from PTES 2014 to explore the taught postgraduate experience.

The research identified the following critical factors for the successful participation and achievement in postgraduate taught education:

- **The importance of scheduled, formalised contact time with both academics and peers**
- **The requirement for a consistent experience in relation to teaching, learning and assessment**
- **The role that workload plays in the overall experience and quality of student outcomes**
- **The necessity for the curriculum to be challenging and appropriate to a higher degree**
- **The availability of structured and timely opportunities for providing module and course level feedback**

12.   ICU Impact Report
The Committee noted the ICU's annual Impact report.

12.1   Mr San explained that the ICU were very happy with the report and the impact they were having in their four main strategic areas:

- Enhancing the Student Experience
- Amplifying the Student Voice
- Building as Student Community
- Creating a Sustainable Organisation

13.   Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice Green Paper College Response   QAEC.2015.30
The Committee noted the College's response to the recent Green Paper.

14.   HEFCE review of Quality Assessment Arrangements
The Committee noted that HEFCE had published the results to their consultation of Quality Assessment Arrangements.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reg/review/

15.   Higher Education Course Changes and Closures: Statement of Good Practice
The Committee noted that HEFCE, GuildHE, the Association of Colleges, the National Union of Students, Study UK, the Independent Universities Group and Universities UK have published a jointly developed Statement of Good Practice on Higher Education programme changes and closures.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2015/Name,107145,en.html

15.1   It was further noted that this document would be discussed in detail as part of the ASF work and via the Programmes Committee.

16.   Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Updates
The Committee noted that the QAA had now published the following subject benchmark statements:

Biosciences
Biomedical Sciences

17. **Higher Education Data & Information Improvement Programme (HEDIIP):**
A new subject coding system for Higher Education
The Committee noted that HEDIIP had published the results of a project to
develop a new subject coding system for the future information landscape.
The new system – known as HECoS (the Higher Education Classification of
Subjects) will replace JACS3 and is intended to provide a more flexible and
future-proof approach to the processing and analysis of subject data.
Full details can be found at https://www.hediip.ac.uk/subject_coding/

17.1 It was further noted that HEDIIP will now be working with stakeholders
across the sector to define an implementation timetable and take forward
the various adoption recommendations set out in the detailed reports.

18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

18.1 **BS/FoE online business modules pilot**
The Committee received an update from Dr Meyer on the Business School's
pilot of providing online modules to undergraduate Engineering students as
part of the BPES offering**.**

18.1.1 The Committee were reminded that in June 2015 QAEC had agreed that the
Business School could pilot offering two online modules (Managerial
Economics – Autumn 2015 & Corporate Finance – Spring 2016) to 3rd and 4th
year undergraduate students in the Faculty of Engineering as an alternative
to the equivalent face-to-face BPES modules.   QAEC had requested that the
Business School report on progress and provide them with an end of pilot
report prior to a decision being taken to extend the offering and roll out
more online modules (and subsequently reduce the number of face-to-face
modules) as part of the BPES programme.

18.1.2 Dr Meyer reported that the results from UG SOLE lecturer/module surveys
for online Managerial Economics module and its face-to-face equivalent was
now available. This showed better satisfaction results for the online module
as compared to the face-to-face version.   It was noted that the student
results for both modules were not currently available.

18.1.3 It was noted that the second online module would be taking place this term
and that more departments had agreed to let their students take part in the
pilot.

18.1.4 The Committee were pleased that that initial indications showed the pilot
was going well and they looked forward to receiving the end of pilot report
which would include a comparison of UG SOLE and results data for the
online modules and their face-to-face counterparts.

19. **Dates of Meetings 2015-6**
15th March 2016, 10:00 – 12.00, Gabor Seminar Room, Level 6, Electrical
and Electronic Engineering – papers by 29th February 2016
17th May 2016, 10:00 – 12:00, Drawing Room, 170 Queens Gate – papers by
3rd May 2016

19th July 2016, 10:00 – 12:00, venue Faculty Boardroom, Level 4, Faculty Building – papers by 5th July 2016

20.   <u>RESERVED AREA OF BUSINESS</u>
There was no reserved business.