Imperial College London

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)
Minutes from the meeting held on
Tuesday 23rd May 2017

Present:
Professor Simone Buitendijk, Vice Provost (Education) - Chair
Dr Lorraine Craig, Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, Faculty of Engineering
Professor Sue Gibson, Director of the Graduate School
Dr Martyn Kingsbury, Director of Educational Development, EDU
Professor Emma McCoy, Chair of the Programmes Committee
Mr Luke McCrone, Imperial College Union, Deputy President (Education)
Dr Edgar Meyer, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programmes, Business School
Professor Alan Spivey, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences
Ms Judith Webster, Head of Academic Services
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement) - Secretary

In attendance:
Men-Yeut Wong, Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement)

Apologies:
Mr David Ashton, Academic Registrar
Professor Des Johnston, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Medicine
Professor Tony Magee, Deputy Director of the Graduate School
Professor Myra McClure, Senior College Consul
Mr Ahmed Shamso, Graduate Students' Union President
Professor Denis Wright, Director of Student Support

MINUTES

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.2016.65
   The minutes from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC)   QAEC.2016.65i
   held on Tuesday 4th April 2017 were approved and Committee Actions were
   noted.

3. **Matters arising from the Minutes**

3.1 Further to Minute 5, it was noted that Senate had recently approved the
    Learning & Teaching Strategy and that, whilst the financial support for the
    strategy was still under discussion, the Provost had confirmed there would
    be substantial investment in it.

3.2 Further to Minute 7, it was noted that the revised Periodic Review Procedure
    would be presented at the September meeting.

3.3   Further to Minute 11.3.3, it was noted that the Assessment Task and Finish Group had made progress in agreeing the fundamental principles which would underpin the proposed single set of regulations for taught programmes. The next step would be for a draft set of regulations to be drawn up. It was noted that decisions may need to be taken which did not have the consensus of the full academic community as it would not be possible to satisfy everyone   and, in the interest of progress, some compromises would be needed.

3.4   Further to Minute 20, it was noted that the College response to the EUA Learning and Teaching Survey had been submitted. A copy of the submitted response was available from the Committee Secretary on request.

3.5   Further to Minute 24.2.1, it was noted that no comments were received on the amendment to the Late Submission Policy for 2017-18 regarding group assignments. The group assignment clause had therefore been added to the final policy.

4.   **QAEC Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership**   QAEC.2016.66
The Committee noted the revised QAEC terms of reference, constitution and membership as agreed by Senate on 17th May 2017. It was noted that the new arrangements would take effect from the September 2017 meeting.

4.1   It was agreed that the constitution should be amended so that the second student representative would be the GSU President (or nominee) so that postgraduate matters could be fully represented.

4.2   It was noted that Dr Edgar Meyer would replace Professor Emma McCoy as Chair of the Programmes Committee and that Professor McCoy would take up the role of Vice Dean (Education) for the Faculty of Natural Sciences.

4.2   It was noted that the Business School, Faculty of Natural Sciences and the School of Professional Development needed to name their representatives and inform the Committee Secretary.
ACTION: Business School, FoNS and SPD

4.3   It was further noted that Senate had agreed the establishment of a new Learning and Teaching Committee and that the first meeting of this Committee would take place in June 2017. The membership of this Committee would include the Vice Deans (Education).

5.   **Statement of Policies and Procedures for Assuring Quality and Standards 2017-18**   QAEC.2016.67
The Committee approved the statement of policy and procedures for assuring quality and standards for 2017-18 and noted that the document was approved annually and provided a publically available summary of the assurance process.

5.1   It was noted that main amendment was that the second stage review for new Master's programmes would now take place as part of the annual monitoring exercise.

6. **Curriculum Review / Data collection process** QAEC.2016.68
Ms Judith Webster reported that the curriculum review process was currently under discussion. Ms Webster further reported that the programme data collection process for SIMP was now underway. The Academic Model Team had met with some of the faculties and were due to meet with all faculties shortly. The Academic Model Team would be collecting the "as is" programme data with a view to building programmes in the new student system ready for September 2018. A schedule was in the process of being drawn up which would determine the order in which departments would be contacted. It was noted that the Faculty of Engineering had provided their preferences for the order in which their departments should be approached.

6.1 Dr Edgar Meyer asked that BEPS and Horizons provision should also be taken into account.

7. **Updates from Academic Standards Task and Finish Groups**

7.1 **Complaints and Appeals Task and Finish Group** QAEC.2016.69
The Committee noted an update from the Complaints and Appeals Task and Finish Group.

7.1.1 Ms Webster reported that all policy and procedures were in their final stages of development. It was hoped that all policies and procedures (with the exception of the new extenuating circumstance policy) should be introduced with effect from 2017-18. It was hoped that the new extenuating circumstances policy would be implemented from 2018-19.

7.1.2 It was noted that whilst the Student Disciplinary Policy would go direct to Senate and on to Council for approval, all other policies and procedures would be considered by QAEC for recommending for Senate approval in October 2017.

7.2 **Admissions and Registration Task and Finish Group** QAEC.2016.70
The Committee noted an update from the Admissions and Registration Task and Finish Group.

7.2.1 It was reported that the Group had now had their final meeting and their work had been completed.

7.3 **Assessment Task and Finish Group** QAEC.2016.71
The Committee noted an updated from the Assessment Task and Finish Group.

7.3.1 It was noted that the Assessment Task and Finish Group had made progress in agreeing the fundamental principles which would underpin the proposed single set of regulations for taught programmes. The next step would be for a draft set of regulations to be drawn up. It was noted that decisions may need to be taken which did not have the consensus of the full academic community as it would not be possible to satisfy everyone and, in the interest of progress, some compromises would be needed.

8.   Regulations

8.1   General, Academic and Examination Regulations for 2017-18   QAEC.2016.72
The Committee considered, with a view for recommending for Senate approval, the General, Academic and Examination Regulations for 2017-18.

8.1.1   The Committee agreed all the changes detailed in the paper and noted that further changes may be needed to facilitate the introduction of the Academic Appeals Procedures, Student Complaints Procedure, Academic Misconduct and Student Disciplinary Procedures, if these were approved with effect from 2017-18.

8.1.2   Further to the paper, QAEC agreed, on the recommendation of the Admissions Task and Finish Group, to remove gender specific pronouns from the Regulations. This would mean that from 2017-18, the terms "he/she, him/her, etc" would be replaced with "they, them, etc".

8.1.3   Further to the paper, QAEC also agreed, on the recommendation of the Assessment Task and Finish Group, to amend the regulation that stated that where Examination Boards award a higher degree classification for borderline students they have to award extra marks (see Master's Examination Regulations 13.3 and Undergraduate Examination Regulations 20.3-20.05). It was agreed that, provided the Student Record Team could implement the change, this should be amended for 2017-18.

8.1.4   As described above, QAEC agreed to recommend, for Senate approval, the changes to the General, Academic and Examination Regulations with effect from 2017-18.

Post Meeting Note
After the meeting, the Student Records Team confirmed that there would be no technical difficulties implementing this change. However, it would mean that, in these instances, a student's numerical mark would not match the College's degree classification rules as shown on the transcript. Furthermore, due to the OSS development freeze, it would not be possible to amend the transcript to explain why this might be the case.
Senate agreed to implement the change to Master's Examination Regulations 13.3 and Undergraduate Examination Regulations 20.3-20.05 with effect from 2017-18.

8.2   Regulations for Students   QAEC.2016.73
The Committee considered, with a view for recommending for Senate approval, the Regulations for Students with effect from 2017-18. It was noted that the Regulations for Students must also be approved by Council.

8.2   It was noted that a major change would be addition of a new regulation prohibiting the covert or concealed recording of staff and students. It was noted that this had been suggested following a number of incidents and that the College's Legal Services Team had been consulted over the inclusion of the new clause.

8.3   QAEC agreed to recommend, for Senate approval, the changes to the Regulations for Students with effect from 2017-18.

Post Meeting Note
The references to the College Health Service were amended to the Imperial College Health Centre and the reference to the College Tutors was amended to the Faculty Senior Tutors.

9.   External Examiners' Summary Reports for 2015-16

9.1   External Examiners' Summary Report 2015-16 – Master's Level Programmes   QAEC.2016.74
QAEC considered the summary of the External Examiners' Reports for Master's Level programmes for 2015-16.

9.1.1   It was noted that many of the issues were also raised at undergraduate level and many issued continued from previous years. The overarching theme from the reports was a lack of consistency of practice across the College, for example:
- Lack of consistency in the annotation of scripts and provision of comments to justify the award of marks, and comments that were inconsistent with the marks awarded;
- Marking schemes not sufficiently detailed;
- Variation in approaches to the award of merit and distinction;
- Inconsistency in quality and timeliness of feedback;
- Programme content: repetition, lack of cohesion, Learning outcomes can be vague;
- Inconsistency in quality and quantity of project supervision;
- Errors in draft exam papers; (External Examiners should not be used to proof read papers).

9.1.2   It was noted that some issues appeared regularly in the reports and this indicated that sufficient action had not been taken to close down the issues. It was noted that mechanisms (such as annual monitoring) were in place to ensure actions were taken but these could be used more effectively.

9.1.3   The Committee were mindful that external examiners were often commenting on programmes in the context of practices at their own institution and that there may be sound reasons not to adopt suggestions from individual examiners (even when these had been raised by a number of examiners).

9.1.4   Nevertheless, the Faculty representatives felt that they had made more success with addressing external examiner comments at undergraduate level

and that it was important to now give the same level of focus to Master's level programmes. It was agreed that it would be useful for the Directors of Postgraduate Study to meet to look at the reports in detail in order to share good practice as well as decide protocols to ensure greater consistency.

Action: Faculty representatives

9.1.5 Professor Buitendijk further explained that it was her intention that a new Learning and Teaching Committee would consider the annual external examiner reports and that the Committee would have the authority to ensure that actions were taken where needed. It was further explained that where good practice had been identified this would also be disseminated by the Committee who would help ensure implementation across the College.

9.2 **College Response to External Examiners' Reports for 2015-16**   QAEC.2016.75

The Group considered the first College level response to Undergraduate and Master's Level External Examiners' Reports for 2015-16. It was noted at the report had been produced in response to an action from QAEC's January meeting when it had been decided that an annual College level response to the external examiners should be produced which would explain the institutional position on such issues such as zero weighted first years, etc. The summary, which would be provided in addition to the individual responses, should also be presented at Senate to help demonstrate the importance and consideration given to external examiners' reports.

9.2.1 Ms Webster presented the report and explained that as many items where under active consideration as part of the Academic Standards Framework Project it had been difficult to construct anything but a holding reply. It was suggested the report could be divided into two sections, one headed "College Policy" and one headed "Under Consideration". Ms Webster welcomed comments on the report and members were ask to send them to her after the meeting.

Action: All members

9.2.2 It was agreed that, for this academic year, rather than circulate the report to external examiners, it would be better to circulate the report to departments so they could use sections from the report in their own responses to their examiners.

9.2.3 It was further noted that as an annual report there was a danger that it might look similar year on year. It was suggested that, although this might be the case in the first few years, the implementation of the new regulations should resolve many of the recurring issues.

10.   Business School

10.1   On-line Business School module pilot for FoE/FoNs   QAEC.2016.76A
          The Committee considered an update on the second year of pilot to make
          several BEPS modules available on-line in addition to face-to-face.

10.1.1 The Committee noted that the Managerial Economics module had met the
          the success criteria, that the Corporative Finance had also met the success
          criteria in the categories for which data was currently available and that the
          Entrepreneurship module had met the criteria in all but one category.   It was
          noted that the issues on the Entrepreneurship module were largely due to a
          change in staff part way through and improvements had now been made to
          the module.   It was also noted that the Business School proposed to offer
          the Accounting module only as an on-line module from 2017-18.

10.1.2 The Faculties of Engineering and Natural Science expressed their satisfaction
          with the provision and it was noted that this mode of study was becoming
          increasingly popular with students and that the Business School also provided
          an introductory video to support students in understanding what to expect
          from studying online.

10.1.3 It was noted that the availability of examination space was one reason why
          the Business School could not increase the number of places available on the
          on-line modules.   It was further noted that the Business School were actively
          considering IT solutions to lack of examination space and a proposal would
          be put to QAEC in due course.

10.1.4 It was noted that the modules were not currently available as extra credit
          modules. This was because the modules required group work and a high
          retention rate was needed to ensure a good student experience. It was noted
          that when modules were offered for extra credit, rather than as part of the
          degree programme, they tended to have higher dropout rates.

10.1.5 It was noted that, in terms of resourcing, online modules were not necessarily
          more cost effective than face-to-face sessions and that in addition, their
          development costs could be very resource intensive when compared to face-
          to-face modules.

10.1.6 QAEC approved the four on-line modules and agreed there was no longer a
          need for the Business School to report back specifically on these four courses
          to QAEC.

10.2   Sample Second Marking End of Year Report   QAEC.2016.76B
          The Committee considered the end of year report for the Business School's
          sample second marking pilot.

10.2.1 The Committee noted that sample second marking had gone well and that
          appropriate checks and balances were in place to ensure it continued to be
          robust.   The Committee noted that the finance suite of programmes, partly
          due to the nature of their material and partly due to choice on behalf of the
          academics, were not included in the pilot.

10.2.2 The Committee agreed to the continuation of the suspension of the regulations for all Business School Master's and undergraduate programmes (excluding the finance suite) until new academic regulations were introduced.

11. **A Traffic Light System for Monitoring the Timeliness of Feedback in Departments for Taught Students.**   QAEC.2016.77
The Committee considered a draft policy from the ICU for the monitoring of the return of academic feedback in departments.

11.1 The Committee agreed that the policy should be amended to say that the timeliness of the return of academic feedback should be added as a standing item for discussion on both Faculty Education Committees and Staff-Student Committee agendas. It was agreed that the policy should not prescribe the format of what should be reported at these meetings but that individuals should not be "named and shamed".

11.2 The Committee welcomed the introduction of the policy which built on good practice from the Department of Life Sciences. Subject to the amendment above, the Committee approved the traffic light policy for implementation from 2017-18.

12. **Programmes Committee**

QAEC.2016.78

12.1 The Committee approved all the recommendations in the latest report from the Programmes Committee from the meeting held on 9th May 2017.

12.1.1 It was noted that the Programmes Committee minutes/papers could be found at: ..\..\..\..\..\..\10.Committees\PC

12.1.2 It was noted that an additional meeting of Programmes Committee was due to be scheduled for early July to consider changes to Bioengineering programmes resulting from the pilot data capture process and for late major modifications to programmes in the Faculty of Natural Sciences.

12.2 **Programme Modification Procedure**   QAEC.2016.78A
The Committee considered the revised programme modification procedure.

12.2.1 It was noted that the proposed procedure had undergone extensive consultation and discussion. It was clarified that, whilst the CMA document "Higher Education: Consumer Law Advice for Providers" was described as a "guidance document" in the paper, the CMA document explained how Consumer Law would be interpreted in the context of higher educational provision and that the College needed to be compliant with the law.

12.2.2 It was noted that the new procedure established deadlines for proposing major changes (end of March) and minor changes (end of July) annually. It was noted that this could be a major departure from current practice where no such deadlines existed.

12.2.3 It was noted that the forthcoming curriculum review would be helpful in reducing the number of modifications requested in the long term. For example, curriculum review would be an opportunity to revisit learning outcomes in order to make them less specific thus reducing the need for changes by building flexibility into descriptions of the programme.

12.3.4 QAEC approved the Programme and Module Modification Policy with effect from 2017-18, noting that it may need to enhanced over time.

13. **Faculty Education Committees (FEC)**
The Committee considered the latest reports from the Faculty Education Committees and noted that the full FEC minutes/papers could be found at: ..\..\..\..\..\..\10.Committees\FEC

13.1 **Business School Education Committee (BSEC) – 3rd May 2017**   QAEC.2016.79
QAEC noted that Master's level annual monitoring had been discussed and that there was nothing to approve.

13.2 **Engineering Education Committee (EEC) – 10th May 2017**   QAEC.2016.80
QAEC noted that Master's Level annual monitoring had been discussed and the outstanding reports would be considered at an extra meeting scheduled for 13th June 2017. It was noted that the EEC had raised a number of issues which they would like discussed at a College level and it was agreed that the appropriate governance structure should be used, for example Estate's issues should be raised by the Faculty with Estates. There was nothing outstanding to approve as the change to entry requirement for the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering had been approved by Chair's Action.

13.3 **Medicine Education Committee (MEC) – 24th April 2017**   QAEC.2016.81
QAEC noted that Master's level annual monitoring had been discussed. It was noted that an external examiner nomination was outstanding and it was   QAEC.2016.82
agreed this should be finalised as a matter of urgency.

Post Meeting Note
Mr Rodney Mountain was appointed as the new external examiner for MSc Healthcare and Design.

13.4 **School for Professional Development Education Committee (SPDEC) – 24th April 2017**
QAEC noted that Master's level annual monitoring had been discussed and that there was nothing to approve.

14. **Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC)**   QAEC.2016.83
The Committee considered a report from the PRQC meeting held on 17th May 2017.

14.1 QAEC approved the Framework for the Support and Development of Imperial College London Supervisors, (which included the development of a

mandatory supervision workshop), and approved amendments to the Research Degree Precepts and the Collaborative Research Degree Precepts with effect from 2017-18.

14.2   It was noted that the departments of Mechanical Engineering and Electrical and Electronic Engineering had not yet provided updates on their PRES 2015 results and action plan.

15.   Surveys

15.1   Survey Calendar for 2017-18   QAEC.2016.84
The Committee approved the survey calendar for 2017-18, noting that they were happy to continue with the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) as a biennial survey.

15.1.1   Professor Buitendijk reported that she planned to review surveys during the 2017-18 academic session.

15.2   Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) – 2016   QAEC.2016.85
QAEC considered a summary of the Faculty level PTES action plans and reports.

15.2.1   It was noted that this item had been postponed from a previous meeting and that, in the meantime, the Faculty of Engineering had been able to add their three outstanding reports.

15.2.2   QAEC noted that many of the recommendations in the report around assessment and feedback had now been implemented.

15.3   SOLE Lecturer/Module Surveys

15.3.1   Autumn Term 2016 Results   QAEC.2016.86 (UG)
QAEC considered the Autumn Term 2016 UG SOLE and the PG SOLE Results.   QAEC.2016.86 (PG)

**15.3.1
.1**   It was noted that the results have been considered at a departmental level via departmental teaching committees, and at a Faculty level via the FECs, and that the results would also be considered as part of annual monitoring in due course.

**15.3.1
.2**   Professor Buitendijk reported that it was her intention to have SOLE results considered in greater depth next academic year.

15.3.2   SOLE Lecturer/Module Surveys Platform
It was noted Qualtrics have now informed ICT that there has been a delay in the development of the lecturer/module component for the system. They have recently replaced their current developer with two new developers. They hope to provide an update in June 2017.

**15.3.2
.1**   It was clarified that the Faculty of Medicine currently use Qualtrics with a bespoke dashboard solution for their clinical placement surveys which are different to lecturer/module surveys. The bespoke dashboard developed by

Qualtrics used by the Faculty of Medicine was not a solution that could be rolled out for lecturer/module surveys.

15.3.2 .2 It was noted that there are number of "off the peg" lecturer/module survey software solutions which could be investigated further, for example, the Business School are successfully using EvaSys. Professor Buitendijk agreed to raise this with Mr Mike Russell.

Action: Professor Buitendijk

15.4   Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

15.4.1 It was noted that the PRES Survey 2017 survey had been open from Tuesday 25th April until Thursday 18th May 2017.

15.4.2 It was reported that 2008 students had participated in the survey and there was a final response rate of 59%. It was noted that PRES last ran at Imperial in 2015 with 1149 students participating and a response rate of 42%. This was an increase in the participation rate of 17%. It was noted that many departments had been actively engaged in promoting the survey this year and this had been instrumental in raising participation rate. The College headline results had already been circulated and the Surveys Team were in process of circulating departmental specific results. National benchmarking reports were due in July and the action planning process would start then. It was further noted that the overall College satisfaction rates looked to be in line with the previous survey.

QAEC.2016.87

15.4.2 The Committee considered the update on the action plans from PRES 2015 and noted that the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and the Department of Mechanical Engineering had not yet provided an update. It was agreed the Business School should be listed as a Faculty in future reports.

16.   Chair's Action
The Committee noted a report from the Chair regarding action taken on behalf of the Committee since the last meeting.

QAEC.2016.88

17.   Collaborative Degree Programmes with Global Partner Universities   QAEC.2016.89
The Committee noted that Provost's Board had approved a proposal from the Business School to establish new collaborative degree programmes.

17.1 Each individual partner would be subject to a due diligence check considered by Provost's Board and the final programme details would be considered by the Programmes Committee and QAEC in due course.

17.2 It was clarified that this was not a joint degree collaboration and that there would be two separate awards, one from each partner, and that there would be no double counting of credit and that progression between the awards would not be automatic.

17.2 It was noted that nomenclature for the collaborative arrangement needed to be agreed.

18.   **HEFCE Updates**

18.1   **Teaching Excellence Framework Year Two: Dissemination of outcomes**
QAEC noted HEFCE's plans for communicating the outcomes of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Year Two. Imperial will receive results on Monday 12 June 2017 and on Wednesday 14 June 2017 all institutions results will be published.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/tef/

19.   **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

19.1   **Faculty of Natural Sciences Education Committee report (NSEC) – 17th May 2017**   QAEC.2016.90
QAEC noted that Master's level and undergraduate annual monitoring had been discussed and that there was nothing to approve.

20.   **Provisional Dates for Meeting 2017-18**
Tuesday 12th September 2017, 10:00 – 12.00, Drawing Room, 170 Queen's Gate
Tuesday 7th November 2017, 10:00 – 12:00, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate
Tuesday 16th January 2018, 10:00 – 12:00, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate
Tuesday 17th April 2018, 10:00 – 12:00, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate
Tuesday 22nd May 2018, 10:00 – 12:00, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate

21.   **RESERVED AREA OF BUSINESS**
There was no reserved business.