Imperial College London

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)
Confirmed minutes from the meeting held on
Tuesday 20th September 2016

Present
Professor Simone Buitendijk, Vice Provost (Education) - Chair
Professor Des Johnston, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Medicine
Mr David Ashton, Academic Registrar
Dr Lorraine Craig, on behalf of Professor Peter Cheung
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
Mr Ahmed Shamso, Graduate Students' Union President
Professor Alan Spivey, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences
Professor Terry Tetley, on behalf of Professor Myra McClure
Ms Judith Webster, Head of Academic Services
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement) - Secretary
Professor Denis Wright, Director of Student Support

Apologies:
Professor Sue Gibson, Director of the Graduate School
Professor Peter Cheung, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering
Professor Tony Magee, Deputy Director of the Graduate School
Professor Myra McClure, Senior College Consul

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.2015.100
	The minutes from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC) held on Tuesday 19th July 2016 were approved and Committee Actions were noted.	QAEC.2015.100i
3.	**Matters arising from the Minutes**	
	The Committee discussed matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda.	
3.1	Further to minute 3.1, it was noted that the Applicants with Criminal Convictions Policy would now come to November meeting.	
	Action: Ms Mel Peter	
3.2	Further to minute 3.2, it was noted the Business School were waiting for the publication of the new arrangements for the consideration of special case entrants before meeting with Admissions.	
	Action: Ms Mel Peter	

3.3 Further to minute 9 regarding sample second marking in the Business School, it was noted that an additional request would be considered later in the meeting [Paper QAEC.2015.105].

3.4 Further to minute 17, it was noted that a revised Roles and Responsibilities documents for Personal and Academic Tutors were not currently available but would come to a later meeting.

3.5 Further to minute 23.1, it was noted that the College response to HEFCE KIS consultation had been circulated to members on 31st August 2016.

4. **Language Learning Policy**   QAEC.2015.101
The Committee considered a revised draft Language Learning Policy provided by the Centre of Languages, Culture and Communication (CLCC).

4.1 It was noted that the document had been written in response to a recommendation made in the periodic review of CLCC, and an initial draft of was considered by QAEC in May 2016. CLCC had been asked to revise the policy and return to QAEC with an updated version.

4.2 QAEC agreed that the issues raised at the previous meeting had been addressed, however, the Committee requested the removal of the following passage as it was noted that the Timetabling Policy does not require departments to release Year Abroad or Language for Science students on Fridays.

Departments are expected to free students on Year Abroad and Language for Science programmes from other teaching during the above slots, in accordance with the Timetabling Policy. In exceptional circumstances only, alternative individualized arrangements will be made with the agreement of the Director of the CLCC. In such cases, Departments will be charged the full FEC for the additional costs that such arrangements generate.

4.3 The Committee also requested that the term "major" European languages was defined with the major languages listed and that, in addition, to the mention of how new languages were added to the Horizons programme, a section on how decisions to remove provision of a language were made.

4.4 The Committee agreed that, subject to the changes mentioned above, the document provided a useful explanation of CLCC's provision. It was further agreed that it provided a good starting point for including CLCC's work in the broader development of a College-wide learning and teaching strategy which would also cover language provision.   It was therefore agreed that, with the changes mentioned above, and with a re-designation of the document as a "statement", it could be published on the CLCC website.

Action: Dr Roberto Trotta, CLCC

5. **General, Academic and Examination Regulations for 2016-17**   QAEC.2015.102v2
The Committee considered changes to the General, Academic and Examination Regulations for 2016-17 and agreed to recommend the changes for Senate approval.

6. **New Operating Model for Quality Assessment and Transition**   QAEC.2015.103
Arrangements
The Committee considered the latest notifications from HEFCE regarding the new operating model for Quality Assessment and Transition Arrangements for 2016-17.

6.1 Ms Webster reported the six yearly QAA Higher Education Review (HER) method of institutional review had been discontinued and this would be replaced by an annual monitoring process. This would be a desk based review carried out by HEFCE (and subsequently the new Office for Students) which would be linked to the existing Annual Accountability Return (AAR). Starting in December 2016, governing bodies would have to submit at an additional assurance with the AAR that there was:

- Continuous improvement of the student academic experience and of student outcomes
- Reliability of degree standards

6.2 It was noted that the reliability of the assurances provided by governing bodies would be tested during the five yearly HEFCE Assurance Review (HAR) visit and that Imperial's HAR was currently scheduled for 2019-20.

6.3 It was noted that there appeared to be no difference between the arrangements for institutions which had recently undergone the QAA's HER method and arrangements for those institutions such as Imperial which had been due to undergo the discontinued HER method in 2016-17.

6.4 It was further noted that these arrangements were separate to the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) requirements, although institutions would have to have a successful AAR judgement in order to take part in TEF.

6.5 Professor Simone Buitendijk outlined experience of Dutch and Belgian quality assurance models and stressed the importance of being able to evidence with data the value of research intensive teaching. She reported that she would initiate a group to consider how the College can best articulate the benefits of a research intensive curriculum within Imperial as well as externally. The group will consider what metrics Imperial can use to evidence the distinctive nature of Imperial taught awards and the advantages of studying as an undergraduate or Master's level student at a leading research institution. The group will also consider planning for the TEF and include representatives from each Faculty, student reps, Ms Judith Webster, Dr Martyn Kingsbury and Dr Malcolm Edwards.

Action: Vice Provost (Education)

7. **Annual Quality Assurance Report for Taught Provision for 2015-16**   QAEC.2015.104

The Committee considered the annual academic quality assurance report for 2015-16 and institutional action plan for 2016-17.

7.2 It was noted that the purpose of the report and action plan was to enable Council to provide a positive assurance report to HEFCE as part of the Annual Accountability Return (AAR) in December 2016. The report had been produced using existing information that relate predominantly to the 2014-15 academic session. It was reported that work would be undertaken during the 2016-17 session to review and revise the annual reports which should be routinely provided to QAEC and Senate.

7.3 It was agreed to add a section on academic staff development and to enhance the section on student voice and NSS. The section on short courses would be reduced and a few further minor modification were also agreed.

7.4 It was noted that it was not intended to present the report in its entirety to the governors or HEFCE but that HEFCE could request the report as evidence as part of their five yearly HAR visit.

7.5 Ms Webster reported that she would be meeting with Jon Hancock, Head of Central Secretariat, to discuss how to engage with the governing body concerning their new role and responsibilities in the new quality assurance framework.

Action: Ms Judith Webster

7.6 QAEC agreed to recommend the report for Senate approval.

8. **Second Sample Marking Pilot in the Business School – to be extended to Undergraduate Provision** QAEC.2015.105
The Committee considered a proposal from the Business School to extend the sample second marking to the Business School's undergraduate provision.

8.1 It was noted that at the previous meeting QAEC had approved a suspension of the Master's regulations to allow the Business School to carry out a sample second marking for all the Business School Master's programmes (with the exception of the Finance suite of programmes). Due to an oversight, the Business School were requesting a similar suspension of regulations for their undergraduate provision (intercalated BSc year, joint honours programmes and BPES modules). It was noted however, that in practice, sample second marking would mainly apply to the iBSc and joint honours programmes as the majority of BPES modules are assessed by multiple choice questionnaires which were marked by electronic scanner.

8.2 It was noted the auditing of all scripts was always carried out and that the External Examiner(s) would continue to moderate the scripts in the usual way. After the meeting it was confirmed that the form of second marking used in the pilot was non-blind check marking and that sample size was 10% of all passing scripts from the top, middle and bottom of the range (and representative of the questions selected by the students) plus all failing

scripts and that should the Business School be allowed to continue with the sample second marking for both Master's and undergraduate provision, they agreed that a minimum of ten passing scripts (plus all failing scripts) would be included in the sample.

8.3   It was noted that at their previous meeting QAEC had been mindful that new regulations may come into effect in due course and agreed that the Business School could therefore only continue with sample second marking until such a time as second marking regulations were finalised when the issue could be re-considered in the light of the new regulations.

8.4   It was further agreed that undergraduate provision could be included in sample second marking, but QAEC should maintain oversight of the arrangements and an end of year report was requested for the 2016-17 academic year.

8.5   QAEC agreed to recommend for Senate approval the continuation of sample second marking on the Business School's undergraduate provision (intercalated BScs, joint honours programmes and relevant BPES modules) and (as previously agreed) for all Master's level provision with the exception of the Finance suite of programmes (which the School currently full second marked).   Senate would therefore be asked at their October 2016 meeting to approve the suspension of the following regulations for the above mentioned Business School provision:

Regulations 14.1 and 14.2 for the *Examination of Master's Level Degrees*

Regulations 18.2 and 18.3 of the *Regulations for the Examination of BSc, MSci, BEng, MEng, MBBS Degrees*

9.	**Programmes Committee**	QAEC. 2015.106

QAEC approved all recommendations in the latest report from the Programmes Committee (meeting held on 6th September 2016).

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

10.   Surveys

10.1	**UG SOLE Summer Term 2016**	QAEC.2015.107

The Committee considered the UG SOLE results from summer term 2016, noting that the summer term survey is optional.

10.1.1   The variation in participation rates between departments was noted.

10.1.2   It was further noted that HEFCE would shortly announce a new question set for the NSS and this would be an opportunity to consider the questions used in SOLE.

11.	**QAEC Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership**	QAEC.2015.108

The Committee noted the QAEC terms of reference, constitution and

membership for 2016-17.

12. **Chair's Action** QAEC.2015.109

QAEC noted a report from the Chair regarding action taken on behalf of the Committee since the last meeting. The Chair had approved an exceptional extension to the term of the external examiner for the Postgraduate Certificate in Industrial Pharmaceutical Chemistry programme to allow the final student on the programme to complete.

13. **Student Handbooks**

The Committee noted updated checklists and a new template (with supporting guidance) for student handbooks had been provided.
See: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/tools-and-reference/quality-assurance-enhancement/programme-information/programme-handbooks/

14. **Register of Collaborative Provision**

QAEC noted the latest version of the College's Register of Collaborative Provision published at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/collaborative-provision/

14.1 It was noted that it was a HEFCE/QAA requirement to publish a Register or Collaborative Provision. Members were asked to alert the secretary to any amendments.

15. **Surveys**

15.1 **NSS** QAEC.2015.110

The Committee discussed the College's latest NSS results. It was noted that the overall analysis of the results, provided by the Strategic Planning Division, had been discussed at senior College committees and that they were due to be discussed at Senate in October and at Council in November 2016.

15.1.1 It was noted that the College ranks within the bottom two quartiles in five NSS Question Categories: Teaching; Assessment and Feedback; Academic Support; Personal Development; and Overall Satisfaction. The College continues to perform poorly in Assessment and Feedback, falling 21 places to 151st in the Sector, remaining in the bottom quartile. It was further noted that the NSS Questions on Feedback in particular ("Feedback on my work has been prompt", "I have received detailed comments on my work", and "Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand") which show the lowest percentage satisfaction across all NSS Questions for the College at 55-56%. The College's rank falls in all NSS Question Categories in 2016. It was also noted that incremental changes of ±1-2% in percentage satisfaction can result in large increases or decreases in rank due to the clustering together of institutional scores. This was particularly in the second quartile, over which there is a small range between institutional scores for most NSS Question Categories.

15.1.2 It was noted that was a College's strategic aim to be "rated in the top

quartile of key national student experience surveys", and that the low scores reported in 2016 required the College to take further action. QAEC acknowledged that any initiatives implemented to improve results may take several years to materialise in improved NSS results but it was agreed that there are "quick wins" and as well as areas of reporting high satisfaction which can be drawn upon in the short term to address some of the more immediate concerns. QAEC agreed that a continued focus on Assessment and Feedback was required to address low scores.

15.2   Surveys Calendar for 2016-17   QAEC.2015.111
The Committee noted the surveys calendar for 2016-17.

15.3   Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)
The Committee noted the HEA had announced they will partner with i-graduate to enable higher education institutions across the world to take part in the HEA's PRES and PTES. This will enable international benchmarking for the surveys.

16.   Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Updates

16.1   QAEC noted the QAA had published a number of "Viewpoint" statements on the TEF, Brexit and the reform of degree awarding powers and university title.
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/newsroom/viewpoint

17.   HEFCE Quality Assurance Updates

17.1   Revised operating model for quality assessment and other updates
QAEC noted HEFCE had published details of the transitional arrangements for 2016-17.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/Year/2016/CL,182016/Title,109301,en.html

17.2   Assurance statements from accountable officers on behalf of governing bodies
QAEC noted the HEFCE circular concerning assurance statements from accountable officers on behalf of governing bodies as part of the new operating model for quality assessment.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2016/CL,252016/

17.3   Raising issues about unsatisfactory quality
The Committee noted that since 1 August HEFCE had been running the Unsatisfactory Quality Scheme. The scheme allows students, staff or others with a direct interest in a university, to raise issues with HEFCE. HEFCE will investigate serious or systemic issues about academic standards or the student academic experience. Guidance and an online tool to clarify what HEFCE can look at, and how to raise concerns is available at:
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reg/forstudents/qualityissues/

17.4   Innovation in learning and teaching project report
QAEC noted that HEFCE had published the results of a small-scale

qualitative study into the motivations of higher education providers for pursuing strategic-level innovations in learning and teaching; the source of these innovations; their impact on the learning experience of students; and their financial implications for higher education providers:
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2016/201617/

17.5 **Outcomes of consultation on changes to the National Student Survey, Unistats and information provided by institutions**
QAEC noted that, on behalf of the UK higher education funding bodies, HEFCE has published the outcomes of the recent consultation on changes to the National Student Survey, Unistats and information provided by institutions.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2016/Name,109328,en.html

Key outcomes included:
- removing detailed information about course delivery from Unistats, and a redesign the site to provide greater support for students in making decisions
- publishing good practice guidance for providing information on higher education institutions' own websites later this year
- publishing details of changes to the Unistats data collection by the end of August 2016
- updating the NSS in 2017 to better support student decision-making, improved learning and teaching, and quality assessment (being careful not to affect time series data needed for TEF)
- announcing final survey questions for the NSS 2017 in September 2016
- developing further proposals on qualitative feedback, feedback from students currently excluded from the NSS, and feedback from taught postgraduate students

17.6 **Outcomes of the Consultation on detailed changes to the Key Information Set data collection for 2017 and approaches to presenting data on the successor to the Unistats website.**
QAEC noted HEFCE had now published the outcomes of the recent detailed consultation on KIS data collection for 2017.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/unikis/consultations/

Key changes included the removal of data fields associated with the:
- proportion of time spent in scheduled learning and teaching and independent study
- proportion of assessment by method
- tuition fee information
- accommodation costs

HEFCE will also relax the validation of course titles and add the ability to reflect where a course is optionally available by distance learning.

It was further noted that HESA will issue a notification of changes to the current KIS data collection, at the beginning of September

18. <u>**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**</u>

18.1   **Panel members announced for Year Two Teaching Excellence Framework**
QAEC noted that HEFCE had appointed members to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) panel including academics, students, employers and widening participation experts.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2016/Name,109667,en.html

19.   **Dates for Meetings 2016-7**
Tuesday 8th November 2016, 10:00 – 12.00, College Room, 58 Prince's Gate – papers by 19th October 2016
Tuesday 10th January 2017, 10:00 – 12.00, College Room, 58 Prince's Gate – papers by 19th December 2016
Tuesday 4th April 2017, 10:00 – 12:00, College Room, 58 Prince's Gate – papers by 20th March 2017
Tuesday 23rd May 2017, 10:00 – 12.00, College Room. 58 Prince's Gate - papers by 5th May 2017

20.   <u>**RESERVED AREA OF BUSINESS**</u>
There was reserved business.