

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Confirmed Minutes from the meeting held on
Tuesday 12th September 2017

Present

Mr David Ashton, Academic Registrar – Chair
Mr Nicholas Burstow, ICU Deputy President (Education)
Ms Alex Chippy Compton, ICU President
Dr Lorraine Craig, Faculty of Engineering representative
Dr Anita Hall, Faculty of Natural Sciences representative
Professor Peter Lindstedt – Senior College Consul
Ms Judith Webster, Head of Academic Services
Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement) - secretary

In attendance

Mr David Parrott, Assistant Registrar (Admissions) for items 1 – 7

Apologies

Professor Anthony Magee, Deputy Director of the Graduate School
Professor Martin Lupton, Faculty of Medicine Representative
Mr Luke McCrone, GSU President
Dr Edgar Meyer, Chair of Programmes Committee

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and apologies, as listed above, were noted.

2. QAEC Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership 2017-18

QAEC.2017.01

The Committee noted the revised QAEC terms of reference, constitution and new membership of the Committee for 2017-18. Mr Ashton explained the revised terms of reference and constitution had been agreed by Senate on 17th May 2017 following a review of the governance structure by the Vice Provost (Education). The revised governance structure included a new Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) which reports direct to Senate and which would lead on the College's new Learning and Teaching Strategy. It was noted that QAEC would work alongside the LTC with QAEC's focus being on the delivery and operation of the College's quality assurance framework.

- 2.1 Mr Ashton stressed that this was a period of significant change, both internally and externally, and referenced the revised operating model for quality assurance; the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF); the new Office for Students; the implementation of a new student system and the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

QAEC.2017.02

The Committee approved the unconfirmed minutes from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC) held on Tuesday 23rd May 2017 and noted Committee Actions.

QAEC.2017.02a

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

- 4.1** Further to Minute 4.2, it was noted that the School for Professional Development had now confirmed their representative as Ms Claire Stapley, Centre Manager. It was further noted that a representative for the Business School still needed to be confirmed.

Post Meeting Note

The Business School representative(s) was confirmed as Ms Karen Tweddle and/or Ms Veronica Russell.

- 4.2** Further to Minute 8.1.3, it was noted that Senate had approved changes to the Examination Regulations which meant that Examination Boards no longer needed to award extra marks when awarding a higher degree classifications in borderline cases (see post meeting note).
- 4.3** Further to Minute 8.8.3, it was noted that the reference to College Tutor had been replaced in the Regulations for Students by Faculty Senior Tutor (see post meeting note). It was further noted that the post of College Tutor would cease to exist after the end of September 2017 and that the new Director of Student Services was planning a College-wide communication explaining this.
- 4.4** Further to Minute 15.3, it was noted that the Vice Provost (Education) intended to set up a new working group to agree a new approach to lecturer/module evaluation. The choice of survey platform would be explored as part of these discussions.
- 4.5** Further to Minute 9.1.4, Mr Ashton asked for the progress made on sharing good practice/protocols for improving consideration of Master's level external examiner reports. Faculty reps confirmed reports were thoroughly considered at Faculty Education Committees.
- 4.6** Further to Minute 17, it was noted that nothing further had been received from the Business School in relation to setting up collaborative degree programmes with Global Partner Institutions. Mr Ashton agreed to follow this up outside the meeting.

Action: QA Team

5. Annual Quality Assurance Report

QAEC.2017.03

The Committee considered the draft annual Quality Assurance Report and Action Plan for 2016-17, noting that it was subject to change following discussion with Professor Jeremy Sanders, the College governor with specific oversight of quality assurance matters, and Senate in October 2017.

- 5.1** Ms Judith Webster reported that HEFCE had announced it would not be publishing its guidance on the annual monitoring reporting process until October and that there was also now uncertainty around whether governing bodies would have to confirm compliance with the standards of Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines (2015) as previously indicated.

5.2 It was clarified that the proposed assessment tariff would be developed to provide guidance for departments and that one of the strands of the proposed work concerning assessment was to reduce the burden of assessment for both staff and students.

5.3 Subject to a few minor changes, the Committee agreed it was happy with the format and content of the draft report.

6. Updates from Academic Standards Task and Finish Groups

6.1 Complaints and Appeals Task and Finish Group

The Committee noted a verbal update on the Complaints and Appeals Task and Finish Group from the Head of Academic Services.

6.1.1 Ms Webster reported that the Student Discipline procedure had been considered at the May 2017 Senate meeting and had been approved by Council in July 2017, taking effect from AY 2017-18.

6.1.2 It was noted that final meeting of the Task and Finish Group would take place on 14th September 2017 and the following procedures would be discussed:

- Extenuating Circumstances Procedure
- Academic Appeals Procedure
- Student Complaints Procedure
- Academic Misconduct

6.1.3 One outstanding item, which would require careful consideration, was the tariff of penalties to be implemented under the Academic Misconduct Policy. It was intended that the penalties should be proportionate and that the new tariff may allow for differentiations between first year and other students in recognition that first year students might not be as familiar with the concept of plagiarism as more experienced students.

6.1.4 Following discussion by the Group, final versions of the documents would be circulated for consultation via the Faculties. The consultation phase would also include discussion with the new Director of Student Services and the ICU.

6.1.5 Some members of the Committee were concerned that the extenuating circumstances procedure needed to deal with issues resulting from mental health problems in a flexible and sensitive manner. It was agreed that more training and guidance was needed for both staff and students around mental health. This issue would be referred to the Director of Student Services.

Action: QA Team

6.1.6 It was confirmed that, following consultation, QAEC would consider the policies and procedures for recommending for Senate approval.

6.2 Admissions and Registration Task and Finish Group

It was noted that, following the final meeting of the Group, the Vice Provost (Education) had asked QAEC to consider whether it would be possible to

QAEC.2017.04

implement the regulations, policies and procedures agreed by the Group from 2018-19.

6.2.1 The Committee noted the work of the Group had mainly covered the General Regulations and the Committee therefore considered a copy of the General Regulations for 2017-18 marked with track changes for 2018-19 entry. It was further noted, that it had not be proposed to implement all recommendations of the Group for 2018-19. The Committee was also asked to consider whether further consultation was needed.

6.2.2 The Committee agreed to all of the proposed changes, (including adding minimum entrance requirements for undergraduate students), with the exception of the change to 9.7 which gave the College the right to terminate a student's registration on the basis of unsatisfactory attendance. It was agreed that the Committee should consider the proposed Attendance Policy and the associated change to the regulation in greater detail at the following meeting, with a view to having a more uniform approach.

Action: QA Team

6.3 Assessment Task and Finish Group

It was noted that this Group had met for the final time and that Ms Webster was in the process of writing the first draft of the regulations and these would be finished shortly. It was further noted that these would be "stress tested" in Registry before being shared further.

Action: Ms Judith Webster

6.3.1 It was agreed that the first draft should be considered by QAEC at its next meeting, before the consultation phase, as it was recognised that there were still a number of difficult questions which needed further consideration. Mr Ashton explained that it was to be expected that a number of compromises would be needed.

Post Meeting Note

It was agreed that the Vice Deans (Education) wanted to see the first draft of the regulations before they were presented to QAEC.

7. Admissions

7.1 Undergraduate Entry Requirements 2019-20

QAEC.2017.05

The Committee considered the undergraduate entry requirements for 2019-20.

7.1.1 The Committee agreed all changes with the exception of the proposal to increase the IB entrance requirement for Computing and Joint Maths and Computing to 41 Points. The Committee agreed its preference would be for the Computing requirement to be 39 Points overall and Joint Mathematics and Computing 40 Points overall. This was so the programmes would be in line with other departments operating at A*AA and A*A*A respectively and to reflect a 'stepped' requirement as per the A Level requirements. It was agreed that this should be raised with the Department.

Post Meeting Note

1. The Department confirmed they were happy to implement QAEC's suggestion.
2. Following the meeting, the Department of Mathematics amended their IB entry requirements to 39p with 7 in Mathematics (HL) and 6 in Other (HL) (instead of 39p with 7 in Mathematics (HL) 6 in Chemistry, Economics or Physics (HL)).
3. Following the meeting, it was noted that Medical Biosciences was detailed as 'standard English' in the paper when this should have been 'Higher'.

- 7.2 Undergraduate Admissions Policy** QAEC.2017.06
The Committee considered revisions to the Undergraduate Admissions Policy with immediate effect, noting that all changes were proposed for greater clarity.
- 7.2.1** The Committee approved all changes making only minor additional revisions.
- 7.3 Postgraduate Taught Admissions Policy** QAEC.2017.07
The Committee considered revisions to the Postgraduate Taught Admissions Policy with immediate effect, noting that all changes were proposed for greater clarity.
- 7.3.1** The Committee approved all changes making only minor additional revisions.
- 7.4 Postgraduate Research Admissions Policy** QAEC.2017.08
The Committee considered revisions to the Postgraduate Research Admissions Policy with immediate effect, noting that all changes were proposed for greater clarity.
- 7.4.1** The Committee agreed that 3.1.1 implied medics with a MBBS (or comparable qualification) also needed a Master's in order to register for a research degree. It was agreed to change this wording to:
- A qualification at FHEQ Level 7 such as: a registrable qualification in Medicine or a Master's degree, awarded by an approved UK university / institution, or qualifications approved by the College as of comparable standards awarded by recognised overseas universities / institutions in subjects deemed appropriate for the programme to which admission is sought.*
- 7.4.2** Subject to the above, the Committee approved all changes making only minor additional revisions.
- 7.5 Special Case Policy for Admission to Postgraduate Programmes of Study** QAEC.2017.09
The Committee considered revisions to the Special Case Policy for Admission to Postgraduate Programmes of Study with immediate effect.
- 7.5.1** The Committee approved all changes to the policy.
- 8. College Response to External Examiners' Reports for 2015-16** QAEC.2017.10

The Committee considered the final version of the first College level response to Undergraduate and Master's Level External Examiners' Reports for 2015-16.

- 8.1** QAEC agreed this was a helpful document and that it should be added as an appendix to the Annual Quality Assurance Report.

Action: QA Team

- 8.2** It was agreed the approved document should be emailed to all external examiners with a copy also going to departments for reference.

Action: Ms Judith Webster

9. Periodic Review Procedure

9.1 Periodic Review Procedures for Taught Programmes

QAEC.2017.11

The Committee considered a revised procedure for the periodic review of taught programmes and considered whether to continue with the suspension of this activity.

- 9.1.1** The Committee noted that it had considered the first draft of the revised procedure at its April 2017 meeting and the procedure had been updated in response to its previous comments. It was further noted that a new proposal was to remove the requirement for a lengthy review report in favour of an enhanced outcome report.

- 9.1.2** In response to comments from the Students' Union, it was agreed that there should be two Student Liaisons (one for undergraduate and one for postgraduate provision), that the students with protective characteristics should be encouraged to contribute to the review activities and that it should be clearer that any student input would be anonymised.

- 9.1.2** It was further agreed that a section explicitly covering equality and diversity should be added.

- 9.1.3** It was noted that, once the new student system had been implemented and improvements made to the recording and report of data, it would be easier both for departments to complete the reviews and for review panels to reach their judgements.

- 9.1.4** Subject to the recommendations above, the Committee approved the procedure, noting more detail would be added before it was introduced.

- 9.1.5** Given the forthcoming proposed implementation of a full-scale review of all the College's taught programmes of studies as part of the L&T Strategy, it was agreed that the periodic review procedure should be suspended for one further year. However, it was agreed that the decision whether to suspend or re-introduce periodic reviews in 2018-19 should be taken early in 2018.

Action: QA Team

- 9.2 Precept and Periodic Review Procedure for Research Programmes** QAEC.2017.12
 The Committee considered revisions to the precept and periodic review procedure for research programmes and the revised PGR review schedule for 2017-18 to 2024-25.
- 9.2.1** The Committee approved the changes to precept and periodic review procedures with immediate effect.
- 9.2.2** The Committee also approved the review schedule, noting that no precept reviews had been carried out during 2016-17 and this had necessitated changes to the schedule. It was noted that those departments due for review had already been informed.
- Post Meeting Note**
 Following the meeting the Vice Provost (Education) agreed that the Director of the Graduate School should approve the external reviewers for review panels.
- 10. New Programme Approval Process** QAEC.2017.13
 The Committee approved revisions to the new programme approval process with effect from 2017-18. The main changes were clarifying the role of the new Online Learning Innovation Group (OLIG) in the strategic approval process and the expectation that all new programmes would conform to a modular structure with 5 or 7.5 ECTS as the base module size.
- 11. Progression/Articulation Agreements for the MBBS programme** QAEC.2017.14
 The Committee considered a proposal from the Faculty of Medicine to allow the establishment of articulation agreements with partner UK and overseas institutions for the MBBS programme.
- 11.1** The Committee noted the existing arrangement with Oxford and Cambridge would end after 2017-18.
- 11.2** The Committee agreed the proposal with immediate effect, noting that the approval of any new arrangements would be a two stage process with the Provost's Board responsible for approving the individual partners and the Programmes Committee/QAEC responsible for approving the individual articulation arrangements and ensuring appropriate alignment with the Imperial curriculum prior to the signing of the agreement.
- 12. Writing Up Period** QAEC.2017.15
 It was noted that this item, proposing revisions to the College's existing policies and procedures for writing up for postgraduate research students, had been withdrawn from the agenda pending further discussion.
Action: QA Team
- 13. Programmes Committee** QAEC.2017.16
 The Committee received the latest report from the Programmes Committee from the meeting held on 4th July 2017 and approved all the recommendations.

- 13.1** The Committee noted there were sometimes significant time lags between the Programmes Committee meetings and QAEC which could delay the implementation of new programmes and major amendments to programmes. It was agreed that, in future, in these instances, QAEC should consider the Programmes Committee report by email.
- 13.2** It was noted that the full Programmes Committee minutes/papers could be found at: <..\..\..\..\10.Committees\PC>
- 14. Faculty Education Committees (FEC)**
The Committee considered the latest report from the Faculty Education Committees, noting only Engineering had met since the last meeting of QAEC.
- 14.1** Engineering Education Committee (EEC) – 13th June 2017 QAEC.2017.17
There was nothing to approve and the Committee noted that the Surveys Team was working with ICT to improve the reporting of SOLE results.
- 14.2** It was noted that the full FEC minutes/papers could found at: <..\..\..\..\10.Committees\FEC>
- 15. Learning & Teaching Committee Report**
QAEC noted a verbal report on the first meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee from the Academic Registrar.
- 15.1** Mr Ashton reported that the LTC had agreed a draft implementation plan for the L&T Strategy with work to take place over next 2 years; that a new working group would be set up to develop a framework for the reward, retention and recognition of teaching staff; and a new working group would also be set up to agree a new approach to lecturer/module evaluation.
- 16. Surveys**
- 16.1 SOLE Lecturer/Module Surveys**
- 16.1.1 Spring and Summer Term 2017 Results** QAEC.2017.18
The Committee considered the Spring Term 2017 UG SOLE and PG SOLE QAEC.2017.18a
Results and the summer term 2017 UG results. QAEC.2017.18b
- 16.1.2** It was noted that the results had been considered at a departmental level and would be discussed at departmental teaching committees and FEC and would also be considered as part of annual monitoring.
- 16.1.2 SOLE Lecturer/Module Surveys Platform**
QAEC noted that the development of a new lecturer/module survey system was currently on hold as Qualtrics could not deliver the system to the College's requirements. The situation was currently being discussed within ICT to see how best to move forward.

16.2 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2017

16.2.1 The Committee considered the College and benchmarking results of the PRES 2017 Survey 2017. QAEC.2017.19

16.2.2 It was noted that the College had significantly improved participation rates for the 2017 survey and that, overall, the results were very similar to the previous survey. The College continued to perform best under resources and research culture and to do less well under supervision, responsibilities and progression.

16.2.2 It was noted that the departmental PRES action plans would be considered by each Faculty's research committee (or equivalent) in November and the Faculty's summaries would be considered by the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC) in January 2018 and QAEC in April 2018.

17. Annual Monitoring Reporting Template and Timeline QAEC.2017.20

QAEC received the annual monitoring report template and timeline for 2017-18 (for reporting on 2016-17), noting that the changes were intended to make the form easier to both complete and review.

17.1 It was discussed whether facilities and services (e.g. car parking, toilets, catering, etc) should be covered in the annual quality reports and it was agreed further consideration should be given to how these matters should be dealt with and followed up.

Action: QA Team

18. NSS 2017 Results QAEC.2017.21

The Committee received the latest NSS results and noted that a number of the College's competitor institutions did not have full institutional results due to a NSS boycott of the survey, this meant that caution should be used when interpreting the results.

19. Academic Model Project (SIMP): Data collection process

The Committee noted a verbal update on the programme data collection process for the Academic Model Project (SIMP) from the Academic Registrar.

19.1 Mr Ashton reported that the academic model project was progressing well and was currently on schedule. Almost all departments had begun the process with two remaining departments due to begin shortly. Departments had met with their named contacts on at least two occasions each to discuss the information which needed to be collected and to identify sources. For most departments the project was currently validating programme level information however some smaller departments (those which sit outside of the faculty structure) have moved onto looking at module level detail.

20. Teaching Excellence Framework

The Committee noted that the College had been awarded a Gold rating in the recent TEF exercise.

See: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/tef/outcomes/#/>

20.1 Mr Ashton reported the following updates planned for future iterations of the TEF:

- the weighting of the national student survey derived metrics would be cut in half;
- high and low absolute values metrics would be indicated alongside a measure of performance against benchmarks;
- there would be a new TEF metric around grade inflation;
- there would be a supplementary metric alongside the existing graduate salary metrics from DLHE.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21. There was no other business.

22. Dates for Meeting 2017-18

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

23. RESERVED AREA OF BUSINESS

There was no reserved business.