

SENATE

Confirmed Minutes of Meeting held on 16 June 2021

Present: Professor Ian Walmsley (Chair); Professors Chilvers, Craster, Distaso, Eisingerich, Green, Haynes, Kingsbury, Lindstedt, McCoy, Meeran, Thompson, Xu; Drs Costa-Pereira, Craig, Fobelets, Gounaris, Malhotra, Rutschmann; Ms Bannister, Ms Flegrova, Ms Makuch; Mr Sood, Mr Tebbutt, Mr Wang; Mr Ashton (Secretary); Ms Webster (Minute Secretary).

In attendance: Professor Neil Alford (For Minute XX)

Apologies: Professors Buluwela, Dougherty, Thompson, Veloso, Weber; Dr Gounaris; Ms Bannister

2538 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted as above.

2539 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 19 May 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

2540 Matters Arising

There were no Matter's Arising not otherwise covered on the Agenda.

2541 Chair's Action

There was no Chair's Action to report.

2542 Provost's Business

Received: A verbal report from the Provost

Reported: (1) That following the latest government announcements, restrictions would continue to be in place on Campus for at least one more month. Work was being undertaken to maximise the availability face to face teaching in the next academic year, whilst giving due consideration to keeping members of the College community safe from disease transmission. The College will continue to pay due regard for local and national requirements.

(2) That there a number of the Senate membership who have served a full three-year term. Senate plays a critical role in ensuring our educational mission is delivered to the highest possible standards and all members coming to the end of their term were thanked for their contribution, in particular the Imperial College Union representatives.

2543 Vice-Provost's Business

Received: A report from the Interim Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) (Paper Senate/2020/29)

Reported: (1) That the Office for Students have set out a timeline for the development of the new Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), which will be undertaken alongside the revised approach to regulating quality and standards to ensure the TEF forms part of a coherent quality system for HE in England. The second phase of the Quality and Standards consultation on the 'B' conditions of registration is expected in July while proposals on the TEF and Condition B3 on student outcomes will be circulated in the Autumn. The timeline, which will be included in the consultation, suggests that the TEF submission period would open in Summer 2022 and outcomes would be announced in early 2023. The OfS have also stated that further work will be undertaken around grade inflation and assessment policies.

(2) That all existing TEF awards have been extended until the publication of the outcomes of the next exercise but given the gap between then and the previous exercise, the OfS is asking all providers not to use their current TEF awards in marketing or promotional materials from September 2021. The Education Office would work with the Communications Team to take this forward.

Considered in discussion: (1) That there was continuing tension between the expectations of successful outcomes for all students and the concern about grade inflation. The College has excellent students coming in and needs to evidence the value added to demonstrate that the degree classifications awarded by the College are appropriate.

2544 Covid-19 Response

Received: A verbal report from the Education and Strategy Operations Group (ESOG)

Reported: (1) That the focus since the last meeting of Senate had been on the plans for the delivery of programmes in the next academic year. The Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) was a member of the Department for Education Contingency Planning Group. The lifting of current Covid restrictions had been delayed by 4 weeks but it was still hoped that all restrictions would have been removed by September and the expectation from the DfE was that HE guidance would be aligned to national guidance. The College will need to undertake risk assessments and put contingencies in place in the event that further restrictions on delivery are required.

(2) That the College would look to timetable with no social distancing constraints as far as possible but will need to minimise large gatherings to manage the risk of 'spreader' events. Large lectures would be expected to be delivered online, both for pedagogic reasons and to minimise risk and that other teaching events could also be delivered online where the same reasons applied. Local risk assessments were being undertaken to identify any constraints in rooms.

(3) In order to inform decisions about delivery for next session, consideration was being given to the work done by the Central Timetabling and Support Office and others around risk assessments and looking at what other institutions are doing. Results from a student survey undertaken by the Imperial College Union had also been taken into account. That had shown that many students were happy with online lectures but were increasingly dissatisfied with the more active aspects of their programmes, such as practicals and labs, being delivered remotely. It was noted that the Universities Minister had expressed disappointment that universities were planning for blended learning when the expectation was that national restrictions would have been lifted.

(4) As last year, the College was sending OfS/CMA letters which set out plans for programme delivery and the student experience, and where that might differ either as a of

curriculum review or where departments were drawing on learning from last year. Consent for the amendments would be given through enrolment forms.

(5) That the planning for the next year as set out above, required a shared responsibility across the College for delivery. Departments would need to set out how they will move between models if necessary. There will be further work on protocols for outbreak management and protocols for testing. DfE wanted institutions to exceed the 70% testing rates for those on campus last year and so will require careful planning. A communications plan to get these messages to the whole staff and student community as well as to new students would be put in place and would be continually reviewed in the light of any change.

Considered in Discussion: (1) That it was important to emphasise that the College will maximise face to face delivery but that this would need students to undertake routine testing to be able to manage outbreaks. The College will need to reserve the right to move to online delivery as required. There will have clear isolation protocols and there will be a need to ensure that these are enforced. DfE are watching trials re rapid testing rather than isolation to manage outbreaks.

(2) That there was no clear definition of what defined a large class for online delivery but that this would be part of the local assessment of the rooms available and the state of ventilation. Other measures such as rotating attendance were being considered to ensure that there could be as much face-to-face delivery as possible. It was anticipated that some students would be nervous about being on Campus in the next year and that some blended learning may help with that too.

(3) That communications to students needed to be clear about testing and about the availability of vaccines via the NHS for overseas students. It was suggested that the OfS/CMA letters could have a standard paragraph in the template to support this messaging. It was noted that it was not possible for the College to guarantee that students get the vaccination but that the College had been negotiating with local centres to ensure availability for students, particularly for those who need to be back on Campus

(4) That the Imperial College Union was pleased to see the position of the College moving towards as much face-to-face delivery as possible and that they were supportive of this. The communication of this to staff and students was very important. It was noted that Heads of Department are aware of this approach and are fully committed to it, but still have to plan a timetable which will ensure that students can continue with their studies without considerable disruption if restrictions are reintroduced.

2545 Education Infrastructure Developments

Received: A presentation from the Associate Provost (Academic Planning)

Reported: (1) That the work being undertaken in this area is crucial given the discussion around space and timetabling for the next academic year. Previous work had proven that it was possible to make the 100 year old Victorian campus more flexible, as evidenced by refurbishments to the Blakett Lecture Theatre in Physics and others. The Glennister lecture theatre has also been transformed to be able to deliver large lectures and small-scale seminar groups. ICT refurbished their working space for smart working in Sheffield which resulted in a greater capacity of desks and enabled a completely different mode of work. Staff were generally positive about these changes.

(2) That student-led design projects, such as the Life Science Common Room had also been remarkably successful. This had transformed from a dark basement room. It was reported that student input into the space discussions through the pandemic had been invaluable. The College Estates team had done a great job to transform Chemistry 1 and 2 rapidly once the pandemic hit.

(3) That the space on the White City Campus has very few cellular offices. The Business School have taken flexible teaching space on the site and the School of Public Health will have two floors of teaching space from 2023. Consideration needed to be given the reconfiguration of space on the South Kensington Campus where most teaching takes place to maximise the flexibility of the available space. Currently the Campus has 35% office space, 39% labs and workshops with over 1000 small offices, 500 mid-size offices and 200 very small taking up a huge area of space.

Considered in discussion: (1) That if the College moves to more multi-mode delivery then it does need to ensure that there was community space on Campus for students to have informal study space, especially given the new timetabling structures to access asynchronous delivery for example. That should then help to alleviate some of the demands for library space for example.

(2) That student shapers projects can help to get student feedback particularly on departmental projects. The Education and Representation Board in the Union had also identified some other areas for development. Students often suggest minor additions to departments – such as more sockets, better furniture or lights and then on the bigger projects, having an input in to the purpose of the spaces and then choosing furniture and colours. It was felt that this collaboration with student representatives is a really valuable model for other projects which the College undertakes.

2546 Regulations for the Award of the MPhil and PhD

Received: A paper from the Academic Registrar (**Paper Senate/2020/30**)

Reported: (1) That a Working Group was established to consider the PGR regulations and to bring them up to date to reflect the research degree milestones in more detail and for the regulations to be reorganised to follow the student lifecycle, as with the single set of regulations for taught programmes. These revised regulations have been seen and recommended by both the PRQC and QAEC and are now being presented to Senate for approval.

(2) That the summary of updates included:

- The Admissions section has been updated to reflect the Postgraduate Research Admissions Policy
- The requirements for the Early Stage Assessment (ESA) and Late Stage Review (LSR) have been more fully articulated in a new section on progression. These have not been changed from the descriptions included in the previous guidance notes but do make the College's expectations for these progression points clearer
- The outcomes available to examiners have been more clearly articulated
- Milestone and review deadlines for part-time students have been revised with a 0.5 FTE calculation.
- Flexibility has been provided for the ESA and LSR deadlines in CDT programmes to take account of the differences in when CDT students start the research element.

(3) That it was proposed that if approved, the regulations would be effective from October 2021. Continuing students would continue to work towards their milestone deadlines as planned from their initial date of registration.

Considered in discussion: (1) That there was still a considerable amount of concern in the Faculty of Engineering around the College's Turnitin Policy for Research Degrees and impact of submitting commercially sensitive document to Turnitin. Work that had not been made publicly available should be protected and ICT has supported the development of secure submission sites. Thesis with national security issues are exempt but if a patent is unintentionally exposed, should the College take that risk of IP loss and potential revenue loss.

(2) That there was a concern that the timing for the implementation of PhD Thesis submission is too soon. Concerns has also been raised about the administrative load for the submission which is a two-stage process through My Imperial and then through Turnitin.

Approved: Senate approved the revised Regulations for the degrees of MPhil and PhD and agreed to defer implementation of the requirement for a Thesis to be submitted through Turnitin for one further year to allow the concerns raised at the meeting to be addressed.

2547 Degree Outcomes Statement

Received: A paper from the Academic Registrar (**Paper Senate/2020/31**)

Reported: (1) That this has been developed jointly between the Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning Teams in response to a report recommending that all institutions publish a statement to strengthen public confidence in the integrity of academic standards and to respond to the perception of grade inflation. The Statements are intended for institutions to demonstrate how they met the expectations of the Quality Code and the OfS conditions of registration relating to qualifications holding their value over time and programmes that meet the academic standards as set out in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. The Statement has been developed in line with guidance documents and a checklist published by the QAA. The statement will be reviewed periodically and the data will be updated annually.

Approved: Senate approved the Degree Outcomes Statement for publication.

2548 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Received: A report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (**Paper Senate 2020/32**)

Reported: (1) That QAEC considered a proposal to require that all postgraduate programmes of study contain only Level 7 modules. The regulations currently allow for programmes to include 15 ECTS worth of Level 6 modules. Under the regulations as currently presented, it could be possible for a student to pass all modules at the threshold pass mark but fail to meet the minimum Programme Overall Weighted Average. Furthermore, it was noted that while the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications allows some Level 6 modules in a Postgraduate taught programme, the sector had moved away from this. If Senate approves this suggestion, the regulations would be amended with immediate effect. Where PGT programmes have already been through Curriculum Review, they would need to be submit modifications to be effective from October 2022.

Approved: Senate approved the proposal that all Postgraduate programmes of study should only contain level 7 modules with effect from October 2022.

(2) QAEC also considered the following items:

- Updated guidance for Boards of Examiners for the 2020-21 academic year and supplementary notes covering a number of areas as set out in the paper.
- An update from the Study Abroad Task and Finish Group and approval of updated procedures for the approval, re-approval and review of student exchange partnerships.
- A summary report of Student Complaints (Taught programmes)

- Minor Amendments to the Fitness to Study Procedure
- Annual Monitoring Reports relating to PGT provision
- Reports from the Programmes Committee and the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee.

(3) That an additional meeting of QAEC was being scheduled after Senate as there was some outstanding business for the academic year. QAEC members were formally thanked for all their hard work.

2549 Learning and Teaching Committee

Received: A report from the Learning and Teaching Committee (**Paper Senate/2020/33**)

Reported: (1) That the Committee had received a report on Differential Outcomes Data which was a summary of observations from the updated Applicant Outcomes report, Differential Outcomes App. The data for the 2020 UCAS cycle were released in February 2020 and the App had been updated.

(2) The Applicant Outcomes report showed that young applicants had a higher success rate than their mature peers (35% vs 13% in 2020), BIBlack and 'other' ethnicity applicants continued to have the lowest success rate (32%) out of the ethnicities explored, and applicants from the most deprived EIMD quintile, Q1, continued to have the lowest offer rate (37%). The percentage of offers that were placed for entry (i.e. conditions of the offer were met and the applicant was expected to register) was also examined in the report. The rate had declined over the past three cycles for mature applicants, from 41% to 23% in the 2020 cycle. Regarding ethnicity, the rate for Black applicants has risen from being the lowest at 25% in the 2019 cycle to third highest at 34% in the 2020 cycle. It was noted that there had been some changes to the admissions criteria for last year which may explain some of the changes.

(3) That the Committee had also considered:

- Educational Infrastructure Projects
- The ongoing work on pedagogy transformation and noted an update of the Learning and Teaching Investment Strategy, including a newly introduced Digital Innovation Fund; A call for submissions for a range of opportunities for seed funding and longer term projects; renewed priorities in education as presented to Senate at its previous meeting.
- The schedule for PGT Curriculum Review.
- Extracts from the Race Equality Charter Action Plan with priority actions related to Education and the student experience.

2450 Date of Next Meetings – 2021-2022

All Wednesday at 3pm
 13 October 2021
 8 December 2021
 23 March 2022
 18 May 2022
 29 June 2022