

Science Studies Committee
5 November 2014
The Drawing Room – 170 Queens Gate
South Kensington Campus

Minutes

Present: Professor A Parry (Chair), Professor S Curry, Dr R Forsythe, Professor J Mestel, Dr E Price-Davies, Professor A Spivey, Mr J Fernando, Miss Z Hsu, Mr P Loose, Professor D Wright, Professor J de Mello, Professor John Seddon.

In Attendance: Miss K Coffield (Secretary)

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Received: Dr S Archer; Dr B Duncombe

2 Minutes

2.1 Approved: Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 May 2014 (**Paper 1**).

3 Matters Arising

3.1 None reported.

4 Chair's Action

Noted: That the following items have been approved under Chair's Action since the previous meeting of the Committee:

4.1 Department of Chemistry

An addition to the assessment procedures for extra-ECTS placements where the placement is a summer internship. It was agreed that students will be required to submit a poster for and participate in the "UROP and Internship poster session" in week 1 of the following academic year.

4.2 Imperial College Business School

An amendment to the assessment format and weightings of the Project Management module (BS0821). The module will now be assessed by 100% coursework broken down to 50% in-class MCQ test (performed under formally invigilated examination conditions) and 50% group report.

5 Constitution, Terms of Reference and Membership

5.1 Approved: The Constitution, Terms of Reference and Membership of the Committee for the 2014-15 session (**Paper 2**).

5.2 Agreed: That the Vice Chairman of the Committee, for the 2014-15 session, would be Professor John Seddon.

6 Senate Summary Report

6.1 Received and Noted: The summary report from the meeting of the Senate held on 18 June 2014 (**Paper 3**).

7 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee Summary Report

7.1 Received and Noted: Two reports covering the June, July and October 2014 QAEC meetings (**Paper 4**).

8 Engineering Studies Committee Summary Report

8.1 Received and Noted: The summary report of the meeting of the Engineering Studies Committee held on 21 May 2014 (**Paper 5**).

9 Medical Studies Committee Summary Report

9.1 Received and Noted: The summary report of the meeting of the Medical Studies Committee held on 4 June 2014 (**Paper 6**).

10 Appointment of External Examiners

10.1 Approved: nominations for Board Chairs and External Examiners for the 2014-15 academic session (**Paper 7**).

10.2 Noted: that one external examiner for the Department of Chemistry had yet to submit a report for 2013-14. Approval of this appointment was conditional upon the report being submitted.

10.3 The Committee noted that the Business School had appointed four new examiners for 2014-15 and asked the departmental representative to ensure that the School considers how this could be avoided in future.

11 Summary of External Examiner Reports on Undergraduate Programmes in 2012-13

11.1 Received and noted: a paper summarising good practice, common themes and key areas of concern identified by External Examiners in their reports on Undergraduate level programmes during the 2012-13 academic year (**Paper 8**).

12 Undergraduate Annual Monitoring

12.1 Received and noted: Annual Monitoring Reports from the Departments of: Chemistry, Imperial College Business School, Life Sciences (Biochemistry & Biotechnology), Life Sciences (Biology), Maths and Physics (**Paper 9**).

12.2 The Departmental representatives summarised the key points from the reports. The Committee looked in particular at the comments of external examiners and the responses of the Department to issues raised by them. The Committee also noted each Department's response to the National Student Survey (NSS).

12.3 The Committee asked that the following points be raised with Quality Assurance:

- A concern was raised over comments on the time taken for feedback/responses from departments to reach the examiners.
- It was noted that some very positive comments had not been highlighted as key points, and the Committee queried the process for determining key points in the reports.
- The Committee suggested a review of the form in order to ensure consistency in the level of detail in the information provided. For example, examiners sometimes give high marks but with very few comments to back the mark up.
- The Committee suggested that the key information could be more summarised more concisely prior to review by highlighting the key points on a cover sheet.
- There was concern over duplication of work done for the NSS response, and the Committee queried whether these tasks can be aligned in a way that minimises this.

13 Good Practice Highlighted During Periodic Reviews 2013-14

13.1 Noted: a paper detailing examples of good practice highlighted within individual periodic reviews which had been reported to Senate during the 2013-14 academic session (**Paper 10**).

13.2 The Committee noted that the information provided was very useful and raised the question of whether there would be an undergraduate equivalent.

Post-meeting note: It was subsequently confirmed that equivalent information is gathered for undergraduate programmes, but that no undergraduate reviews had been reported to Senate in 2013-14 and so there was no report to share with the committee on this occasion.

14 Roles and Responsibilities Documents

Noted: the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee's revisions to the roles and responsibilities documents for key positions within the College.

15 New Programmes of Study

15.1 Department of Mathematics

Approved: a proposal from the Department of Mathematics to establish a BSc 3 year / MSci 4 year programme in Mathematics with Education, in collaboration with

Canterbury Christ Church University (**Paper 11**).

The programme will offer 2.5 years / 3.5 years mathematics respectively, and 0.5 years' teacher training courses, together with the requisite number of weeks in school placements.

The Department expects a maximum of 15-20 students to enrol on the programme which will lead to a Mathematics BSc / MSci respectively, and Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

The proposal had been based closely on the existing BSc degree programme in Physics with Science Education, which has been running since October 2012 and has graduated four students to date. The MSci in Physics with Science Education, approved by Senate in February 2014, is due to start in 2015.

The Department does not intend to admit students directly onto these degrees, but to allow students on the 2nd year of a BSc Mathematics degree or the 3rd year of an MSci Mathematics degree to transfer onto the new BSc and MSci programme respectively.

The Committee noted that the programme specification and ECTS breakdown had not yet been submitted, and that the programme had not yet been subject to external review. However, based on the curriculum documentation submitted, and mindful of the similarity with the existing degree programme in Physics with Science Education, the Committee was fully supportive of the proposed programme.

The Committee therefore approved the proposed programme in principle, subject to the College's collaborative programme approval processes being satisfactorily completed.

The Committee noted that the Academic Registrar would need to work with the Department to ensure that the necessary paperwork is submitted and that appropriate external review of the proposal is undertaken.

In addition, validation by Canterbury Christ Church University, the collaborating institution, will be sought, and a Memorandum of Agreement will be required.

The Committee's recommendation to Senate will be that, in accordance with paragraph 1.3 of the Regulations for the award of the BSc and MSci degrees in the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Senate approves, in principle, the BSc and MSci in Mathematics with Education degree programmes, for internal transfer only, with effect from January 2015.

16 Modifications to Undergraduate Programmes of Study

16.1 Imperial College Business School

Approved: changes to the assessment of the Business for Professional Engineers and Scientists programme (**Paper 12**).

The Committee considered proposed amendments to the assessment of this programme. The rationale for the amendment was a need to test students on a broader range of subjects. The Business School had proposed the use of more MCQs for the assessment of BS0820 Managing Innovation, BS0844 Accounting, BS0808 Finance & Financial Management and BS0845 Strategic Management.

The Committee considered the justification of the use of more multiple choice questions and, following some discussion, approved the use of short answer questions instead of MQCs for the modules listed above.

16.2 Department of Life Sciences

Approved: A proposal to rename degree programmes in the Department of Life Sciences (**Paper 13**).

The Committee considered a proposal to rename BSc degree programmes in the Department of Life Sciences, replacing “Biology” with “Biological Sciences”. The Department stated that Biology no longer properly reflected the truly interdisciplinary nature of the discipline of these degrees, and that Biology as a subject title was increasingly regarded as outdated. The renaming was proposed to tackle declining numbers of applications.

The Committee's recommendation to Senate will be to approve the renaming of all relevant BSc programmes as listed below with effect for new entrants from October 2016:

- C100 Biology
- C1N2 Biology with Management (BSc)
- C1NG Biology with Management (BSc)
- C1R1 Biology with French for Science (BSc)
- C1R2 Biology with German for Science (BSc)
- C1R4 Biology with Spanish for Science (BSc)
- C1NF Biology with Management and a Year in Industry/Research (BSc)
- C1NA Biology with Management with a Year in Industry/Research (BSc)
- C102 Biology with Research Abroad (BSc)
- C110 Biology with a Year in Industry/Research (BSc)

17 **Dates of next meeting**

Noted: The date of the next meetings of the Science Studies Committee is 18 February 2015, 12.15pm in the Boardroom – 58 Princes Gate.

18 **Any Other Business**

None.

K Coffield
January 2015