

Faculty Education Committee (FEC)

Faculty of Natural Sciences

DATE: Wednesday 28 November 2018
TIME: 12:00 – 14:00
LOCATION: The Drawing Room, 170 Queen's Gate

MINUTES – UNCONFIRMED

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present

Prof Emma McCoy (EMcC)	vice-Dean (Education) FoNS (Chair)
Dr Donald Craig (DC)	DUGS Chemistry
Dr David Evans (DE)	DUGS Mathematics
Dr Robert Forsyth (BF)	DUGS Physics
Dr James Wilton-Ely (JWE)	Chemistry PGT Representative
Prof Richard Thompson (RT)	Faculty Senior Tutor
Dr Ryan Barnett (RB)	Maths PGT Representative
Dr William Proud (WP)	Director of Postgraduate Studies, Physics
Dr Mike Tennant (MT)	CEP Representative
Ms Michaela Flegrova (MF)	RCSU Academic Affairs Officer
Mr Alejandro Luy (AL)	Deputy President (Education), ICU
Ms Moira Sarsfield (MS)	Principal Learning Technologist
Prof Jonathan Mestel (JM)	College Consul, Mathematics
Ms Kate Ippolito (KI)	Educational Development Unit (EDU) Representative
Dr Felicitas Starr-Egger (FSE)	CLCC Representative
Prof Lesley Cohen (LC)	College Consul, Physics
Ms Nazia Hirjee (NH)	Faculty Operations Officer
Dr Vijay Tymms (VT)	FoNS Programmes Committee Rep., Physics
Mr Mark Anderson (MA)	EDU Representative
Mrs Rebecca Middleton (RM)	Faculty Education Manager
Mr Scott Tucker (ST)	Registry Representative
Mr Stefan Hoyle (SH)	Head of Health and Safety, FoNS

Apologies

Dr Huw Williams (HW)	DUGS Life Sciences
Dr Niki Gounaris (NG)	Life Sciences PGT Representative
Mr Will Bennett (WB)	ICT Representative
Ms Ute Thiermann (UT)	GSU President

In attendance

Kasia Kmieckowiak (KK)	Administrative Assistant, FoNS
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2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The committee reviewed the minutes from the FoNS Education Committee (NSEC) held on Wednesday 26th September 2018 [**NSEC.2018.20**] and the Committee Action Tracker [**NSEC.2018.21**]. The committee noted that the last paragraph under item 9 should read:
*If the HOD/DPS/DUG decides on reading the comments that they need to share them with someone else, such as a line manager, they can do so **without** reference to anyone else.*

With this minor change, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record and the action tracker document was updated.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes/ Action Tracker

Action 10 – See Item 9. The Maths and Physics with Education programmes have been suspended.

Committee noted the queries not listed as Actions in the last minutes.

4. **National Student Survey**

The following departments gave a verbal update on their NSS Action Plans:

4.1 Chemistry – DC reported that the NSS results will be reviewed across the department in due course. The comments that are consistent throughout the survey relate to:

- Lack of sense of community across the department; the department has introduced a calendar to show which members of staff are at WC/South Kensington campus on a particular day.
- Excessive workload especially at Year 2. Many students felt that they are overloaded mainly with lab work in certain weeks whereas other weeks are fairly quiet. DC said that the department aims at spreading the lab and coursework evenly across the academic year to avoid this.

4.2 Life Sciences – most of the comments raised in the survey were addressed. It was noted that the Department of Life Sciences had held a Wellbeing Fair at the end of October. It was attended by both students and staff and its aim was to improve the sense of community in the department, and highlight support to students. It was well attended and received a number of positive comments hence the plan is to hold similar events in the future, possibly in other departments as well.

4.3 Mathematics – the comments raised in the NSS had been consulted with Year Reps and had been added to the Action Plan and the Annual Report. It was reported that the department organised a Resilience Workshop with an external speaker. It was mainly aimed at Year 2 students who had found the workshop really useful. They had expressed that the transition between the high school and university is particularly difficult. They often try to be perfectionists which puts loads of pressure on them, hence learning how to deal with a failure was particularly useful.

EMcC reported that the department will be arranging funds for tutors to use to organise student events, to cover the costs of beverages etc.

4.4 Physics – the department is developing an Action Plan based on the survey results and comments gathered at the Staff Meetings over the Summer. These mainly related to:

- Community issues
- Space
- Curriculum - it is overloaded hence, the department works on reducing the content;
- Feedback – staff is still improving that aspect
- Changes to Y1 and Y2 progression (see Item 8.1)

EMcC added that Professor Simone Buitendijk, Vice-Provost (Education) had set up the NSS Action Group which will help address the issues raised in the NSS at College level.

5. **Undergraduate Annual Monitoring Reports**

The committee considered UG Annual Monitoring Reports submitted by the following Departments:

5.1 Chemistry

5.2 Mathematics

5.3 Physics

The Life Sciences report will be submitted by mid-December.

MF reminded members that the UG Annual Monitoring reports should be shared with students.

DUGS noted that this would be the case and the reports would be made available via Blackboard, or other online forum.

ACTION: DUGS to share UG Annual Monitoring reports with students.

KI added that junior members of staff would benefit from sight of the comments given by the External Examiners. In response to that, EMcC and RF said that this information is already shared in the Departments of Mathematics and Physics.

The DUGS mentioned that it would be helpful to see the data split out into BSc and MSci Programmes.

ACTION: ST to split the raw Annual Monitoring data by BSc and MSci and send the summary to the departments.

The committee briefly discussed feedback issues. EMcC reported that the electronic format of the coursework feedback forms works well. It is more likely to be filled in and it is more structured thanks to the minimum word count set in the electronic system. In response to that, MS said that this feature could be added to electronic forms across all departments.

ACTION: DUGS to contact the Learning Technology team should they wish to have a minimum word count being added to the electronic coursework forms.

6. PTES

The committee considered the response to the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2018 submitted by the Department of Chemistry.

DC reported that the participation rate had been very good (~60%) and the comments were better than the College's average. The main issues raised by students in the PTES related to:

- Feedback – staff need to write more constructive feedback; some courses' marking sheets had been altered so the assessors will have to provide a minimum level of feedback. Also the MRes students had felt that the feedback had not been provided regularly hence tutors are encouraged to do it more often.
- The split between White City and South Kensington – some students will be working on two sites hence better communication is needed so they are aware where to turn for help.

RF pointed out that Physics' PTES response rate had been very low and asked DUGS how to encourage students to participate in that survey. In response to that, EMcC suggested sending personalised emails and to keep chasing students to fill it in.

RM reported that the RCSU/ FoNS UG Student Survey had been opened on 26th November, and would close on 17th December 2018. They had been already 170 responses received.

AL reported that the Student Experience Survey was due to launch imminently. This survey covers College-level services and support, plus the ICU.

With regards to all the surveys being carried out to date, NH added that a cautious approach should be taken before creating any new survey. This is to avoid over-surveying students. She said that the focus should be on taking actions based on the comments from the existing surveys.

7. Curriculum Review - Initial Draft Paperwork

The committee considered draft paperwork submitted by the Departments of Mathematics and the CEP.

RM reported on behalf of HW, who was not available to attend the meeting that the Life Sciences draft CR paperwork had been sent for review by the Curriculum Review Panel 5 and that HW would be meeting with the panel during the w/c 03 December to receive and discuss their comments.

MT reported that the CEP plan to introduce two new MA courses in 2019.

DW reported that that the Department of Mathematics created a document outlining a detailed curriculum content for Y1 and Y2. The Maths CR group meet weekly and will invite students to give their input into the curriculum review process.

8. Major Modification Proposals

8.1 The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Physics for a Major modification to the following programmes:

- MSci Physics
- MSci Physics with a Year Abroad
- BSc Physics with Theoretical Physics

- MSci Physics with Theoretical Physics

RF reported that the aim of this modification is to give more flexibility to Senior Tutors who are dealing with cases where students do not meet the minimum standards and miss the progression boundaries, but who are likely to improve. Senior Tutors will be able to communicate the transfer to other degree programmes as a recommendation rather than a requirement and will base their decision on a specific circumstances of a student.

Subject to Programmes Committee's approval, the committee approved the proposal.

- 8.2** The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Physics for a Major modification to the assessment for the Physics Year 3 Complexity and Networks module. The aim is to reduce the number of assessment. RF confirmed that students will be consulted on that.

Subject to Programmes Committee's approval, the committee approved the proposal.

- 8.3** The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Mathematics for a Major modification to the MSc in Mathematics and Finance. EMcC reported that this proposal had been approved via Chair's Action - see agenda item 21.4

- 8.4** The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Chemistry for a Major Modification to the Advanced Chemistry Topics II Module.

Subject to Programmes Committee's approval, the committee approved the proposal.

9. Suspension of the Physics with Science Education Programmes

The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Physics to suspend the Physics with Science Education degree programmes for an indefinite period. EMcC reported that this programme might be re-introduced after the curriculum review is completed.

The proposal to suspend the Physics with Science Education degree programmes was approved.

10. Proposals for the Establishment of a New Student Exchange Partner

- 10.1** The committee considered proposal from the Department of Chemistry for the Establishment of a New Student Exchange with the University of Melbourne.

The proposal to establish the above New Student Exchange Partner was approved.

- 10.2** The committee considered a proposal from the Department of Physics for the Establishment of a New Student Exchange with the University of Utrecht.

The proposal to establish the above New Student Exchange Partner was approved.

11. Faculty Prizes for Excellence 2019

The committee considered a proposal for reallocation of prizes. RM reported that it was felt a separate prize category should be created for Personal Tutors (or anyone who provides pastoral support for students). She explained that nominations would need to be seconded by a student She asked the committee for comments to be sent to her before 21st December.

ACTION: All to send comments regarding the Prizes for Excellence Personal Tutor award category to RM by 07 December.

12. Guidance on health and safety while supervising undergraduate and masters students

The committee considered the updated guidance on health and safety while supervising undergraduate and masters students. SH informed the committee that the following main additions to the document had been made:

- Added section on reporting safety, security or health related incidents while on offsite work and link to current FoNS guidance (approved previously via FMC)
- Added section on Mental health and wellbeing during projects

- c. Clarification that if a student discloses a medical issue that makes them at increased risk for low risk environments (office based projects or similar) the PI needs to make appropriate arrangements regarding lone working in these environments.

The committee agreed with the proposed changes.

MT added that guidance should be developed for accidents that happen abroad as there had been issues in the past with the insurance provision following an accident that occurred abroad.

Post meeting note:

SH confirmed that the Faculty Management Committee had approved guidance on reporting accidents earlier this year (attached). In response to MT comments about the College response if someone is severely injured or requires urgent assistance while abroad, SH confirmed that:

- 1) The College Travel Working Group (Chaired by John Whitlow) is reviewing all aspects of offsite work, including emergency response provision. The group has representation from all faculties, insurance, risk management, safety, business continuity, HR, registry and governance.*
- 2) Currently the procedures for escalating emergency responses require those needing assistance to contact the College Insurance provider (24 / 7, 365 days a year service) in the first instance. Procedures will then be escalated as required. If needed this will involve (in FoNS) informing appropriate HoDs and the Dean to review after care for any individuals who require it upon their return.*

13. Standing Items:

13.1 Safety- verbal update (SH) – see agenda item 12.

13.2 Education – verbal update (EMcC and RM)

EMcC reported that the College had not been selected to take part in the upcoming TEF pilot.

RM reported that in direct response to students' feedback, the Faculty would be running Positive Communication Training. The workshops are aimed at staff, both academic and administrative, who have regular contact with students. The first workshop took place on 22nd November and focused on verbal communication; the next will be held on 3rd December and will focus on email communication. She added that the participants had been mostly nominated by the HoDs.

13.3 Faculty Senior Tutor - verbal update (RT)

RT reported that a Personal Tutoring survey had been conducted among UG students. Over 700 responses had been received with some very constructive comments.

RT also updated the committee on the training for personal tutors that was being rolled out across the Faculty. The training consists of a short 1 hour session, with presenters including the Senior Tutor from the Department, and representatives from the ICU Advice centre, mental health support and counselling. Sessions had already taken place in Maths and Physics and were being planned for LS and Chemistry for the new year. RT noted that at a recent Faculty Management Team meeting, it had been confirmed with HoDs that this training should become compulsory for all personal tutors.

13.4 Learning Technology Matters – (MS)

MS reported that she had received funding via a pedagogy transformation bid towards recruiting more staff to the Learning Technology Team. The number of staff will eventually increase from three to nine.

MS also reported that a 'Happiness Algorithm' had been created to help with allocating students to projects etc. This could be extended to match students to supervisors, for example, or to mix people with different backgrounds to create diverse groups.

13.5 FOO – verbal update (NH)

NH reported that very detailed feedback had been received from the Admissions Office related to the issues with the new admissions process in CRM/ Banner. As a result, extended

work had been carried out to improve processes which should minimise the pressure and stress among colleagues dealing with admissions.

NH will report more details at the next meeting on the following matters:

- Project to improve selected the lecture theatres, making the space more flexible and suitable for innovative teaching
- New initiative to improve the communal areas thanks to funds received from the President's Office.

13.6 Registry - verbal update

ST reported that the Quality Assurance Agency would soon be launching its new [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#).

14. Curriculum Review Briefing Notes on the New Regulations

The committee noted Curriculum Review Briefing Notes on the New Regulations.

15. Postgraduate MRes Admissions End of Year Report 2018 Entry

The committee noted Postgraduate MRes Admissions End of Year Report 2018 Entry.

16. Postgraduate Taught Admissions End of Year Report 2018 Entry

The committee noted Postgraduate Taught Admissions End of Year Report 2018 Entry.

17. Undergraduate Admissions End of Year Report 2018 Entry

The committee noted Undergraduate Admissions End of Year Report 2018 Entry.

18. Undergraduate Admissions Statistics 2019 Entry

The committee noted Undergraduate Admissions Statistics 2019 Entry.

19. Short Course Annual Monitoring 2017/18

The committee noted Short Course Annual Monitoring 2017/18.

20. Minutes of the Previous Meetings of the NSEC Sub-Committees

The committee noted the latest, confirmed minutes from the UG/Masters Sub-Committee meetings: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/natural-sciences/education-and-teaching/fons-education-committee/>

21. Chair's Report

The committee noted the following actions taken by the Chair on behalf of the committee:

21.1 Modification Proposal-MRes Maths of Planet Earth

The Chair has approved the proposal from the Department of Mathematics for a Major Modification to the MRes in Mathematics of Planet Earth via Chair's Action.

21.2 Suspension of the MSc in Conservation Science

The Chair has approved the proposal from the Department of Life Sciences to suspend the MSc in Conservation Science via Chair's Action for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years.

21.3 Modification Proposal- MSc Environmental Technology

The Chair has approved the proposal from the CEP for a Major Modification to the MSc in Environmental Technology.

21.4 Modification Proposal- MSc Mathematics and Finance

The Chair has approved the proposal from the Department of Mathematics for a Major modification to the MSc in Mathematics and Finance.

22. Minutes of the Postgraduate Professional Development Committee (PPDC)

The committee noted the latest minutes from the Graduate School's Postgraduate Professional Development Committee: <\\icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk\Registry\10.Committees\PPDC>

23. Minutes from QAEC, Senate and the other Faculties' Education Committees

The committee noted the latest minutes from the QAEC, Senate and the other Faculties FEsCs <\\icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk\Registry\10.Committees> <smb://icfs5g.cc.ic.ac.uk/registry/10.committees/> (for Mac users)

24. Any other business

On behalf of the committee LC congratulated RM who won the Staff Supporter of the Year award at the inaugural Enterprise Lab Awards. She won the award for her fantastic work on supporting student innovation and enterprise through FoNS-MAD and the Schools Science Competition.