

## Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Confirmed Minutes from the meeting held on

Tuesday 7th November 2017

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### Present

David Ashton, Academic Registrar – Chair

Nicholas Burstow, ICU Deputy President (Education)

Dr Lorraine Craig, Faculty of Engineering representative

Dr Anita Hall, Faculty of Natural Sciences representative

Professor Peter Lindstedt, Senior College Consul

Judith Webster, Head of Academic Services

Alexandre Adler, PhD Student Representative [representing Mr Luke McCrone]

Claire Stapley, School of Professional Development representative

Karen Tweddle, Business School representative

Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement)

Scott Tucker, Assistant Registrar (Monitoring and Review) - Secretary

### Apologies

Dr Edgar Meyer, Chair of Programmes Committee

Professor Anthony Magee, Deputy Director of the Graduate School

Mr Martin Lupton, Faculty of Medicine Representative

Luke McCrone, GSU President

#### 1. Welcome, Apologies and Announcements

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

1.2 The Committee noted that Sophie White is leaving the College; the Chair thanked Sophie for her support with QAEC as well as her wider work across the College.

#### 2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Committee approved the unconfirmed minutes from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC) held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and noted Committee Actions.

QAEC.2017.22

**3. Matters arising from the Minutes** QAEC.2017.22a

**3.1** The Committee noted that the actions set out in the action log were either ongoing or items on the agenda.

**4. HEFCE Guidance: Annual Quality Assurance Report** QAEC.2017.23

**4.1** The Committee considered the circular letter from HEFCE regarding the annual Quality Assurance Report. The letter set out the process for collecting assurances from HEFCE-funded providers' governing bodies about the quality of higher education provision in 2017-18, and the actions required by providers.

**4.2** It was highlighted that, contrary to previous information from HEFCE, the requirement for providers to map their activities against the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) was no longer a requirement of Annual Provider Review. However, the College had undertaken this action nonetheless.

**4.3** It was reported that the College's Annual Quality Assurance Report for Education Programmes 2016-17 was recommended by Senate to Council on 11 October 2017, subject to some minor revisions. Following consideration of the annual report, Council has been asked to agree that:

- The College is discharging its quality assurance and enhancement responsibilities appropriately and through agreed processes
- For all programmes leading to an Imperial College London award, academic standards have been appropriately set and maintained in accordance with the College Regulations, requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education, the European Standards and Guidelines (2015) and appropriate Professional and Statutory Body (PSRB) requirements
- The quality of the student learning opportunities have been evaluated and appropriate steps have been taken to improve them, in line with the aims of the College's Strategic Plan

The College will provide the above assurance statements to HEFCE by 1 December 2017.

**5. Consultation on the QAA Quality Code** QAEC.2017.24

**5.1** The Committee considered the consultation document on the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education. The UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) has been set up to provide sector-led oversight of

higher education quality assessment arrangements and the QAA is coordinating responses to the consultation on behalf of UKSCQA.

It was noted that full consultation documentation was available at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/newsroom/consultations/consultation-on-the-uk-quality-code-for-higher-education#.WfdErNVI-Ul>

**5.2** The Committee discussed the proposed sector ‘expectations’ and ‘core practices’ which might be included in a revised Quality Code. The following points were made:

- At this early stage of development, it was difficult to envisage how the revised Quality Code would unify Higher Education in the UK whilst recognising and increasingly diverse market
- Not all members supported the QAA’s ambitious attempt to ensure the new Code serves a wider audience, such as academic staff and students. It was argued that it is the responsibility of *providers* to translate the Code into institutional policy that is more relevant to such a wider audience
- On the surface, the four proposed expectations appear to rationalise the current Code’s 19 expectations. However, more detailed information will still likely be contained within the new Code, albeit under a different guise, so such rationalisation could be deemed superficial
- Much of the language in the proposed expectations and core practices seemed to place the onus on the provider; more emphasis should be placed on the learning process as a collaborative partnership between staff and students
- Reference to the ‘admissions system’ in the fourth expectation seemed to allude to the widening participation agenda, however, if this is the case then this reference should be made more explicit.

It was agreed that the Committee’s feedback should inform the College level response to the consultation, which must be approved at Senate, prior to submission to the QAA on 13 December 2017.

**ACTION: Head of Academic Services**

## **6. Attendance Policy and Regulations**

QAEC.2017.25

**6.1** The Committee considered proposed attendance regulations and policy for 2018-19 implementation, which were recommended by the Admissions and Registration Task and Finish Group.

**6.2** At its meeting in September 2017, the Committee recommended for approval to Senate the proposed regulations and Attendance Policy which will support the implementation of the new regulations with effect from 2018-19, subject to the following revisions:

- (7) Students must inform their Senior Undergraduate/Postgraduate Tutor if they are absent from College for more than three **consecutive** days during term.
- (9) If the absence is due to illness, a medical certificate must be produced after for periods of more than seven **consecutive** days.
- (9) If a summative examination (or other **summative** assessment) is missed on account of illness students must contact their Senior Undergraduate/Postgraduate Tutor on the day of the examination, a medical certificate must be produced immediately within five working days.

However, in the light of concerns arising from UKVI delays with provision of visas that occurred at the start of the 2017/18 session, it was felt that more thought was needed to be given to the wording and any administrative arrangements associated with this.

**6.3** Authors of policy documents were reminded to consider the requirements of online programmes and consider using language that is not wholly synonymous with attendance in a physical space.

## **7. Academic Standards Framework: Single set of Regulations**

QAEC.2017.26

**7.1** The Committee received a progress update on the draft single set of regulations

**7.2** It was noted that, following the last meeting of QAEC, a preliminary draft single set of regulations has been produced. However, there are still some significant areas which require further discussion and resolution. It has been agreed by the Vice Provost (Education) that VPAGE will receive a position paper on these areas and will propose recommendations to be incorporated into the draft regulations. Following the VPAGE meeting on 7 December, a draft will be circulated for broader discussion in the Faculties. The proposed single set of regulations will then be provided to QAEC on 16 January 2018.

**7.3** For reference, it was confirmed that the Assessment Task and Finish Group minutes were noted at QAEC on 23 May 2017.

## **8. Annual report from the Working Party for Strengthening Discussion of Postgraduate Issues at Staff-Student Committees**

QAEC.2017.27

**8.1** The Committee considered the third annual report of the Working Party for Strengthening Discussion of Postgraduate Issues at Staff-Student Committees (SSCs).

**8.1.1** The Faculty of Medicine reported poor attendance by PGR student representatives at the joint PGT and PGR SSC. It was confirmed that PGR student representatives were not elected in the same way as PGT and therefore difficult to identify. However, the ICU and GSU are working to resolve this issue.

**8.1.2** Separate PGT and PGR SSCs were discussed as a viable option, which the Faculty of Medicine is currently considering.

**8.2** The Committee approved minor amendments to the Good Practice Guidelines for Staff Student Committees, and agreed that the document can now be published online.

## **9. Surveys (I)**

### **9.1 Proposal to run a College-wide cost of living in London survey**

QAEC.2017.28

**9.1.1** The Committee considered a proposal from Student Financial Support to run a College-wide cost of living survey.

**9.1.2** The Committee agreed that the collection of the cost of living data would assist in developing central College publications such as prospectuses and online fees and funding webpages. However, it was felt that the significant number of proposed questions, some of which the Committee believed required students to check further documentation (e.g. utility bills), could lead to survey fatigue. As a result, the rolling out of the proposed survey in its current form was not approved.

**9.1.3** The Committee agreed to the Chair's recommendation that a small number of the relevant questions from the proposed cost of living in London survey should be added to the existing Student Experience Survey (SES). It was agreed that this is managed by the Student Financial Support Manager (Louise Menard) and Head of Strategic Projects (Emma Caseley).

**ACTION: Secretary**

### **9.2 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2018**

QAEC.2017.29

**9.2.1** The HEA has announced the surveys window for 2018 and will be allowing institutions to keep the survey open for over four months. However, it was proposed that the College only provides a smaller opening period of 30 days. The Committee noted the following rationale for the reduced opening period:

- A concentrated survey window allows for focused advertising and communications
- Most survey responses happen towards the survey deadline

- It is best to avoid being open over Easter break when there is no support available or active communications encouraging responses
- It is sensible to avoid clashing with PG SOLE (scheduled to run from Tuesday 13 March to Tuesday 17 April).

**9.2.2** The Committee agreed that the PTES 2018 should be open for the following period:

- Open: Thursday 17 May 2018
- Close: Friday 15 June 2018

## **10. Annual Report on Active Student Exchange Links**

QAEC.2017.30

**10.1** The Procedure for the Establishment, Renewal & Review of Student Exchange Partners states that QAEC receives an annual report on the number of exchange links in operation at the College.

The Committee considered the annual report on active student exchange links and noted that:

- A total of 133 exchange links (involving 66 institutions) exist at UG level
- A total of 26 exchange links (involving 25 institutions) exist at PGT and/or PGR level.

**10.2** With uncertainties over Brexit and Erasmus+ opportunities, the Committee discussed exchanges with institutions in the USA, a country that sits fourth with the College in terms of total students by exchange partners by country. However, it was highlighted that academic year timings and current credit structures can often prevent more exchanges being set up. However, the forthcoming curriculum review might be an opportunity to address these issues.

## **11. Programmes Committee (PC)**

QAEC.2017.31

**11.1** The Committee considered the latest report from the Programmes Committee from the meeting held on 5th September 2017

**11.1.1** The following new programmes were approved:

- MSc Business Analytics (Business School), with effect from October 2018 (part time, online version)
- MSc Health Data Analytics (School of Public Health), with effect from October 2018
- MSc Applied Computational Science and Engineering (Department of Earth Science and Engineering), with effect from October 2018

**11.1.2** Modifications to the following programmes were approved:

- Interdisciplinary Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership (School of Public Health), with effect from October 2017
- MSc Innovations in Cardiological Sciences & PG Cert Innovations in Cardiological Sciences (National Heart and Lung Institution), with effect from October 2018
- Global On-line MBA (Business School), with effect from October 2017
- Finance Suite of Master's Programmes (Business School), with effect from September 2017
- Specialised Master's Programmes (MSc Climate Change, Management & Finance, MSc Strategic Marketing and MSc International Health Management), with effect from September 2018
- MEng Civil Engineering, with effect from October 2017
- MSc Molecular Medicine, with effect from October 2018
- Undergraduate Programmes (Department of Computing), with effect from October 2017
- MRes Tropical Forest Ecology (Department of Life Sciences), with effect from October 2017
- MSc Surgical Innovation (Department of Surgery and Cancer), with effect from September 2017
- MSci Geology Programmes (Department of Earth Science and Engineering), with effect from October 2017
- MSc Finance (Business School), with effect from September 2017
- MSc International Health Management (Business School), with effect from October 2017.
- MSc Management programme (Business School), with effect from October 2017
- MBA, Global MBA, Executive MBA and Weekend MBA (Business School), with effect from October 2017
- MSc Advanced Aeronautical Engineering (Faculty of Engineering), with effect from October 2017
- MSc Statistics (Department of Mathematics), with effect from October 2017

**11.2** The Committee considered the latest report from the Programmes Committee from the meeting held on 17th October 2017.

**11.2.1** The following new programme was approved:

- PGDip/MSc Digital Health Leadership (Surgery and Cancer), with effect from March 2018

**11.2.2** The following programme received strategic approval for developing a range of existing short courses from the Centre for Environmental Policy into a full-time MSc Programme:

- MSc Sustainable Management

**11.2.3** Modifications to the following programmes were approved:

- MSc Taxonomy and Biodiversity (Department of Life Sciences), with effect from October 2018
- MRes Molecular and Cellular Biosciences (Department of Life Sciences), with effect from October 2018
- MSc Reproductive & Developmental Biology (Department of Surgery and Cancer), with effect from October 2018
- MBA Programmes (Business School), with effect from October 2017
- MSc Sustainable Energy Futures (Department of Mechanical Engineering), with effect from January 2018.

**11.3** It was noted that the full Programmes Committee minutes/papers can be found at: <..\..\..\..\10.Committees\PC>

**12. Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC)**

QAEC.2017.32

**12.1** The Committee considered the latest report from the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee from the meeting held on 25th October 2017.

**12.1.1** The Committee considered a proposal to permit PhD, EngD, MD (Res) and MPhil students the choice of Creative Commons (CC) licence under which their thesis would be made available in the College's repository. It was recommended to Senate that:

- a) The thesis submission regulations are changed to allow PhD, EngD, MD(Res) and MPhil students to choose the licence under which their thesis will be deposited in Spiral;
- b) The 'CC BY-NC' licence (Attribution-No Derivatives) is made the default licence;
- c) Any research student funded by RCUK must deposit their thesis under the 'CC BY' licence, as this is required by the RCUK open access policy.

The Committee further recommended to Senate that:

- a) Students and supervisors will be expected to be responsible for understanding the CC licences available;
- b) The Library Services and Graduate School will continue to provide education on CC licences, including the online copyright awareness course available in Blackboard;
- c) The embargo request procedure remains as is, but that there should be no extension of the maximum 24 months (unless a specific exception is granted);
- d) Theses should be given digital object identifiers (DOIs) to aid discoverability, citation, impact tracking, reuse and access to researchers conducting TDM;

- e) Research students are strongly encouraged to register for an ORCID iD to aid discoverability, authorship identification, indexing of their work, and reporting.

**12.1.2** The Committee considered the Interim Report of the World-Class Research Supervision Task and Finish Group for the Student Supervisor Partnership. It was recommended to Senate that all students are appointed a 'Main Supervisor' as of the 2018-19 session.

In addition, the Committee recommended the following documents to Senate:

- a) 'Roles and Responsibilities – Main Research Degree Supervisor';
- b) 'Mutual Expectations for the Research Degree Student Supervisor Partnership', to replace the Codes of Practice;
- c) 'Defining the Roles within Research Degree Supervisory Teams'
- d) 'Roles and Responsibilities – Assistant Supervisor';
- e) 'Framework for the support and development of Imperial College London - Postdocs who are Assistant Supervisors';
- f) 'Postdocs who contribute towards the research student supervisor partnership: Formal appointment of Assistant Supervisors and Co-Supervisors';
- g) 'Early Stage Assessment (ESA) Form / Late Stage Review (LSR) Form';
- h) The 'Policy on Research Degree Supervision', to replace Eligibility for Research Degree Supervision.

#### **Post Meeting Note**

A minor revision was made to the 'Policy on Research Degree Supervision', which clarified training and development for honorary appointees who are main supervisors. The change was approved by Chair's action for consideration at Senate.

**12.1.3** The Committee noted the list of active Partner Research Institutes, Split PhD and Imperial Recognised Locations. In addition, the Committee approved a minor amendment to the Approval, Renewal and Review of PRIs process: that five-year reviews of active PRIs will not be undertaken; instead, PRQC will receive an annual report on collaborative partners.

**12.2** It was noted that the full Postgraduate Research Quality Committee minutes/papers could be found at: <..\..\..\..\10.Committees\PRQC>

### **13. Faculty Education Committees (FEC)**

**13.1** The committee considered the following reports from the Faculty Education Committees:

- Business School (BSEC) – 3rd October 2017 (QAEC.2017.33)

QAEC.2017.33

- Engineering Education Committee (EEC) – 27th September 2017 QAEC.2017.34
- Medicine Education Committee (MEC) – 25th September 2017 QAEC.2017.35
- Natural Sciences Education Committee (NSEC) – 27th September 2017 QAEC.2017.36
- School for Professional Development Education Committee (SPDEC) – 18th October 2017 QAEC.2017.37

**13.2** The Committee discussed feedback timeframes within faculties and acknowledged that, although it is useful to keep track of performance and encourage timely feedback, it is important that any monitoring process should respect departmental differences and current resourcing levels.

**13.3** It was noted that that the FEC minutes/papers can be found at:  
<..\..\..\..\10.Committees\FEC>

#### **14. Learning and Teaching Committee Report**

**14.1** The Committee received a verbal report on the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting held on 31st October 2017.

#### **15. Chair's Action QAEC.2017.38**

**15.1** The Committee noted the actions taken by the Chair since the last meeting.

**15.1.1** Programme withdrawals with effect from 2017-18:

- MSc in Physics with Shock Physics (1YFT) - Department of Physics
- MSc in Physics with Shock Physics (2YPT) - Department of Physics

**15.1.2** Programme suspensions with effect from 2017-18:

- MRes in Advanced Computing (1YFT) - Department of Computing

**15.1.3** Amendment to Entry Requirements for the Department of Computing:

- The removal of the GRE as a compulsory entry requirement for the MSc in Computing Science, MSc in Advanced Computing and MRes in Advanced Computing with effect from October 2018 entry

**15.1.4** BML Munjal University (BMU):

- Approval for the Business School, for a trial period of two years, to admit a small number (3-5) students from BMU

**15.1.5** Amendment to start dates from October 2018 to September 2018 for the following programmes:

- MSc Climate Change, Management and Finance
- MSc Strategic Marketing
- MSc International Health Management

**15.1.6** New College-wide survey for PGR students:

- Approval of the College's participation in the HEFCE funded PGR Wellbeing Project comprising: an institutional visit to speak to staff involved with pastoral care of PGR students (26 October, afternoon); a PGR student focus group and/or 1-2-1 student interviews (26 October, morning); and an institution-wide PGR student survey (for 2nd years and above)

**15.2** The Chair brought to the Committee's attention a recent request made for a late programme withdrawal, which had a small number of applicants due to commence study. The Chair confirmed that the request was rejected and highlighted the importance of adhering to consumer law regulations as well as the College's moral responsibility to applicants.

**16. Good Practice from PGR Periodic Reviews 2016-17**

QAEC.2017.39

**16.1** The Committee noted good practice from the PGR Periodic Reviews carried out in 2016-17 as follows:

1. Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering (6 February 2017)
2. Department of Physics (27 March 2017)
3. Department of Bioengineering (28 March 2017)

**17. Surveys (II)**

**17.1 ICU Response to PRES 2017**

**17.1.1** It was noted that the ICU's response to the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2017 can be found at:

<https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/your-union/your-representatives/responses>

**18. Academic Model Project (SIMP): Data collection process**

**18.1** The Committee received a verbal update on the programme data collection process for the Academic Model Project (SIMP) from the Academic Registrar. The Chair reported that the project continues to progress well. All departments have now started the process with a large number of

departments now signing off programme-level information. Progress has been slower than expected in a small number of departments due to complexities which had not been anticipated, however, the SIMP team is mapping out these programmes before the information is documented. Departments in the School for Professional Development are moving along more quickly due to lower volume of programmes.

**19. QAA Updates**

**19.1 Subject Benchmark Statement for Materials**

**19.1.1** The Committee noted that the QAA has published a revised subject benchmark statement for Materials, which can be found at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=3193#.We4X0iiWyUk>

**20. Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)**

It was noted that HEFCE has published Year Three procedural guidance:

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2017/201725/>

**21. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**22. Dates for Meetings 2017-18**

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 10:00 – 12:00, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018, 10:00 – 12:00, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018, 10:00 – 12:00, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate

**23. Reserved Area of Business**

**23.1** There was no reserved business.