

## Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

Confirmed Minutes of the meeting held on  
Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016

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### **Present**

Professor Sue Gibson, Vice Provost (Education) - Chair  
Dr Lorraine Craig, Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, Faculty of Engineering  
Dr Martyn Kingsbury, Director of Educational Development, EDU  
Professor Emma McCoy, Chair of the Programmes Committee  
Dr Edgar Meyer, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programmes, Business School  
Mr Chun-Yin San, Imperial College Union, Deputy President (Education)  
Ms Judith Webster, Head of Academic Services  
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement) - Secretary

### **In attendance:**

Ms Mel Peter, Head of Admissions, Registry (for item 5)  
Ms Crystal Grant, Head of Admissions, Business School (for item 5)

### **Apologies:**

Professor Peter Cheung, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Engineering  
Mr Liucheng Guo, Graduate Students' Union President  
Professor Tony Magee, Deputy Director of the Graduate School  
Professor Myra McClure, Senior College Consul  
Professor Des Johnston, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Medicine  
Professor Alan Spivey, Vice Dean (Education), Faculty of Natural Sciences  
Professor Denis Wright, Director of Student Support

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting noting that Professor Des Johnston had replaced Professor Sue Smith for the Faculty of Medicine and that Professor Emma McCoy was joining the Committee as Chair of Programmes Committee and Dr Martyn Kingsbury was joining the Committee as Chair of the SPD Faculty Education Committee and as representative for EDU.

### **2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The unconfirmed minutes from the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC) held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016 were approved. The Committee also noted upcoming Committee actions.

QAEC.2015.31  
QAEC.2015.31a

### **3. Matters arising from the Minutes**

Further to minute 5, it was noted at the request from the Faculty of Medicine for a sample marking pilot would now be presented at the May meeting.

### **4. Academic Standards Framework**

The Committee received an update regarding the Academic Standards Framework. It was noted that the Assessment Task and Finish Group and

the Complaints and Appeals Task and Finish Group were making good progress and that the ICU had provided a helpful paper detailing their position.

## **5. Admissions Policies**

### **5.1 Undergraduate Admissions Policy**

QAEC.2015.32

The Committee considered updates to the current Undergraduate Admissions Policy with immediate effect.

**5.1.1** Ms Mel Peter, Head of Admissions, presented the policy and explained that it had not been updated for some time. It was noted that it may be necessary for a full review in future, in light of the ASF project, but for the time being this was a tidying up exercise to ensure the policy was up to date.

**5.1.2** QAEC approved the changes with the addition of “business” to section 1.1. The revised policy would be reported to the next Senate.

### **5.2 Postgraduate Taught Admissions Policy**

QAEC.2015.33

The Committee considered updates to the Admissions Policy for Master’s Level Programmes with immediate effect.

**5.2.1** Ms Peter presented the policy and explained that it had not been updated for some time. It was noted it may be necessary for a full review in future, in light of the ASF project, but for the time being this was a tidying up exercise to ensure the policy was up to date.

**5.2.2** QAEC approved the changes. The revised policy would be reported to the next Senate.

### **5.3 Postgraduate Research Admissions Policy**

QAEC.2015.34

The Committee considered updates to Postgraduate Research Admissions Policy with immediate effect.

**5.3.1** Ms Peter presented the policy and explained that it had not been updated for some time. It was noted it may be necessary for a full review in future but for the time being this was a tidying up exercise to ensure the policy was up to date.

**5.3.2** The Committee agreed that the progression arrangements for 1+3 integrated Master’s and PhD programmes should be removed from the policy pending further discussion by the Assessment Task and Finish Group.

**Action: Assessment Task and Finish Group**

**5.3.3** QAEC approved the changes. The revised policy would be reported to the next Senate.

### **5.4 Special Cases for Admission to Postgraduate Programmes of Study**

QAEC.2015.35

The Committee considered proposals for the consideration of special cases for admission for postgraduate programmes with effect from entry 2017-8.

- 5.4.1 Ms Peter presented the proposal explaining that QAEC had asked to review the existing policy following their discussion at their last meeting concerning progression arrangements.
- 5.4.2 The Committee were broadly supportive of the move consolidate the existing two special cases pathways into one policy. It was clarified that the proposed policy did not stipulate that Special Qualifying Examinations (SQEs) should be offered to all special case applicants but only that they could be used when it was appropriate to do so.
- 5.4.3 The Committee agreed that the requirement for 3 years' work experience for graduates with a degree that is below UK Lower Second Class Honours level (or with a degree from a "new or untried" institution) could be replaced with "appropriate work experience". It was noted that whilst the Business School, were very much in favour of removing the 3 years' work experience requirement, this would result in an extra 900 applications per year for them to consider.
- 5.4.4 The Committee agreed that it would be important that there was greater transparency and clarity in the policy and requested further guidance on what constituted a "new or untried" institution.
- 5.4.5 The Committee agreed that the number and outcomes of applicants admitted by the special cases route should be routinely monitored via the annual monitoring and period review procedures.
- 5.4.6 Ms Peter agreed to return to the May meeting with a revised proposal for consideration by QAEC.

**Action: Ms Peter, Head of Admissions**

- 5.5 **Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders** QAEC.2015.36  
The Committee considered a revised policy regarding the recruitment of ex-offenders. The revised policy would be renamed "Policy for the Admission of Applicants who disclose Criminal Convictions".

- 5.1 Ms Peter presented the proposal and explained that, in addition to the change in terminology, the revised policy focused on recruitment of applicants only, previously the policy covered admission to programmes of study and recruitment to College posts. It was also being proposed that a panel was set up to review positive disclosures.
- 5.2 The Committee were supportive of the change in focus and terminology but agreed the policy needed further clarification and elaboration. It was agreed that Ms Peter should work with the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Medicine to develop the policy further and bring it back to the next meeting.

**Action: Ms Peter, Head of Admissions**

**Post Meeting Note**

This item has been deferred until the July 2016 meeting.

## **6. Collaborative Provision**

### **6.1 Guidelines for Establishing and Reviewing Collaborative Provision** QAEC.2015.37

The Committee considered updates to the College policy for establishing and reviewing collaborative provision.

**6.1.1** It was noted that revisions had been made to take into account new QAA guidance; to add a new definition for double degrees (which clarified there was no double counting of credit on Imperial double degree awards); to reflect the new committee structure and; to increase timescale for reviewing arrangements.

**6.1.2** The Committee approved the changes with immediate effect. The revised policy would be reported at the next Senate.

### **6.2 Collaborative Modules** QAEC.2015.38

The Committee considered updates to the College policy and procedure for establishing and reviewing collaborative modules.

**6.3.1** The Committee agreed to bring the amount of collaborative provision on an Imperial award into line with the existing APL policy which stipulated up to a maximum of one third of the award could be brought into a programme. The Committee agreed that, in the case of undergraduate degrees, this maximum could relate to the whole award and it should not be broken down at an individual year level.

**6.3.2** Subject to the change in 6.3.1, QAEC approved the policy with immediate effect. The revised policy would be reported at the next Senate.

## **7. Periodic Review**

It was noted that QAEC had considered the following periodic reviews during the 2014-5 academic session and that, as part of the outcome of those discussions, departments had been asked to report back to QAEC in a year's time on their progress in meeting the recommendations in the reviews.

### **7.1 Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication [previously known as Centre for Co-Curricular Studies] - UG Periodic Review 2013-4** QAEC.2015.38

The Committee considered the follow up report from the UG periodic review of the Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication (CLCC).

**7.1.1** Ms Judith Webster, Head of Academic Service, agreed to follow up with CLCC the status of the language requirement paper referred to under item 5 in the report.

**Action: Ms Judith Webster**

**7.1.2** The Committee were satisfied that all other recommendations in the review had been satisfactorily addressed.

### **7.2 School for Public Health PG Teaching Periodic Review 2013-4** QAEC.2015.39

The Committee considered the follow up report from the PG Teaching Periodic Review of the School of Public Health (SPH).

- 7.2.1** The Committee noted that, during the Vice Provost (Education) Student Forum/QAEC, a MRes student based at the Hammersmith campus had flagged a need for the provision of more training in statistics. The Committee wondered whether these students could be given the option of joining the MSc in HMG, MSc in EPI and MPH students for their statistics training at the St Mary's campus. It was agreed this would be suggested to the SPH.  
**Action: Ms Sophie White**
- 7.2.3** The Committee were satisfied that all recommendations in the review had been satisfactorily addressed.
- 7.3 Department of Computing – UG Periodic Review 2013-4** QAEC.2015.40\*  
It was noted that this report would now be considered at the May 2016 meeting of the Committee.
- 8. Second Stage Review of the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine MBBS Programme 2016-7** QAEC.2015.41  
The Committee noted the arrangements for a bespoke second stage review of the LKC MBBS programme.
- 8.1** It was noted that the Joint Management Board had recently agreed some minor changes to the arrangements. They had also agreed that the review would now take place over two days.
- 8.2** The Committee approved the arrangements and subsequent modifications made by the Joint Management Board.
- 9. A Framework for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)** QAEC.2015.42  
The Committee considered a framework for GTAs which had been developed by the Graduate School and undergone extensive consultation.
- 9.1** Dr Edgar Meyer asked the Committee to consider whether GTAs should be allowed to act as Module Leaders and set assessments as is established practice in US Business Schools.
- 9.2** The Committee did not support the Business School's proposal and the Framework was agreed without modification with immediate effect. The framework would be reported at the next Senate.
- 10. Dean's List for Faculty of Natural Sciences** QAEC.2015.43  
The Committee considered a proposal for the establishment of a Dean's List and changes to transcript reporting for the Faculty of Natural Sciences on a trial basis.
- 10.1** The Committee noted that the proposal was in line with existing practice for other faculties. The proposal was approved for all undergraduate programmes, in all years, for the 2015-6 academic session. It was noted that the Faculty's Master's programmes would not be included in the trial.

**11. Update on the On-line module pilot for FoE Undergraduate Students** QAEC.2015.44

The Committee received an update on the pilot to deliver the “Managerial Economics” module as an on-line module to Faculty of Engineering undergraduate students and considered a request to run an extended pilot for a second year in 2016-7.

- 11.1** The Committee agreed that initial indications were good. It was noted that the update report of the second module “Corporate Finance” would also be considered by the Committee in May.

**Post Meeting Note**

Due to the timing of assessments and evaluations for the Corporate finance module, it has been agreed that this report will be considered by the Committee in July.

- 11.2** The Committee heard the Business School wished to extend the pilot for the 2016-7 session and that it was not the intention of the Business School to fully withdraw the face-to-face versions of the modules although fewer streams may be offered. It was noted that students would be able to choose either the on-line or face-to-face version of the modules.

- 11.3** It was also explained that the Business School had learnt some valuable lessons during the pilot of both “Managerial Economics” and “Corporate Finance” and future on-line modules would continue to be enhanced and developed as a result.

- 11.4** It was agreed that the Business School could extend the offering of “Managerial Economics” and “Corporate Finance” to year 3 and year 4 Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Natural Sciences students in 2016-7. It was also agreed that a possible third module in “Entrepreneurship” could be offered if developed in time for students’ module selections.

**12. Vice Provost (Education) Staff-Student Forum/QAEC** QAEC.2015.45

The Committee considered the notes from the UG Staff-Student Forum and noted that the notes from the PGT and PGR forums would come to the next meeting. It was hoped the notes could be circulated at Staff-Student Committees as a means to stimulate discussion and share good practice.

**13. External Examiner Summary Report 2014-5 - Undergraduate Programmes** QAEC.2015.46

The Committee received the external examiner summary report for undergraduate programmes for 2014-5.

- 13.1** It was noted that many of the themes raised by external examiners accorded with the aims of the Academic Standards Framework project (i.e. to manage the variation in the volume of assessment and to reduce the amount of assessment).

- 13.2** It was noted that the report would be circulated to the Faculty Education Committees for further discussion in their faculties. Evidence from the

report would also be further discussed by the Assessment Task and Finish Group as part of their deliberations.

- 14. Chair's Action** QAEC.2015.47  
The Committee noted a report from the Chair regarding action taken on behalf of the Committee since the last meeting.

- 15. Programmes Committee** QAEC.2015.48  
The Committee noted Chair's action had been taken to approval all of the recommendations in report from the Programmes Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016. The Committee noted the report had been received by the February 2016 Senate.

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

- 16. Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC)** QAEC.2015.49  
The Committee noted the report from the PRQC held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2016. It was noted that the PRQC had now received all but 3 of the academic department action plans from PRES 2015. The outstanding reports were being chased.

It was noted that the PRQC minutes/papers could be found at: <..\..\..\..\10.Committees\PRQC>

- 17. Faculty Education Committees (FEC)** QAEC.2015.50  
The Committee noted the Natural Sciences Education Committee (NSEC) from the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

- 17.1** It was noted reports from the following FECs were currently unavailable but would be presented at the next meeting,  
Business School Education Committee (BSEC) held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016  
Engineering Education Committee (EEC) held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016  
Medicine Education Committee (MEC) held 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016  
School for Professional Development Education Committee (SPDEC) held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

It was noted FEC minutes/papers could be found at: <..\..\..\..\10.Committees\FEC>

**18. Surveys**

- 18.1 Autumn 2015 UG SOLE lecturer/module evaluation results** QAEC.2015.51  
The Committee considered the UG SOLE lecturer/module evaluation results for the Autumn Term 2015 survey.

- 18.1.1** It was noted that whilst the College level participation rate for the survey had dropped slightly, the rate was still significantly better than many other Higher Education Institutions who struggled to get a rate of around 30% for similar surveys. It was agreed that the variation in participant rates across programmes and departments was, however, a cause for reflection and it

was important for good practice in achieving high levels of response to be shared widely.

- 18.2 Autumn 2015 PG SOLE and MODES lecturer/module evaluation results** QAEC.2015.52  
The Committee considered the PG SOLE and MODES lecturer/module evaluation results for the Autumn Term 2015 survey.
- 18.3 Surveys Calendar for 2016-7** QAEC.2015.53  
The Committee approved the surveys calendar for 2016-7 as recommended by the Surveys Working Party.
- 18.4 Surveys Working Party** QAEC.2015.54  
The Committee noted the unconfirmed minutes from the annual meeting of the Surveys Working Party held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016.
- 18.5 Reporting and investigating concerns about undue influence on the National Student Survey**  
It was noted that HEFCE had published its processes for investigating concerns about National Student Survey data quality. They have set out how concerns can be reported and the actions that HEFCE may take in response. To see the process for reporting concerns with NSS data, visit: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/nss/>
- 18.6 PRES Consultation**  
It was noted that the Higher Education Academy are carrying out a [consultation on possible changes to the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey \(PRES\)](#). Topics include: the relevance of PRES for Doctoral Training Centres/Partnerships and Professional Doctorates; the timing of PRES; and the publication of results.
- 18.6.1** Committee members were asked to send their feedback to Ms Sophie White who would draft a response for consideration by email in time for the survey deadline of the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016.

**Action: All members**

#### **Post Meeting Note**

The HEA has extended the PRES consultation deadline until the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2016. A draft response will therefore be considered by the Postgraduate Research Quality Committee (PRQC) before coming to QAEC for approval at their May meeting.

- 19. Postgraduate Admissions Network (PAN)**  
It was noted that the minutes from the first Postgraduate Admissions Network held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016 were available at: [..\..\..\..\10.Committees\PAN](#)
- 19.1** Items discussed at the meeting included special cases and international equivalency.
- 20. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Updates**

It was noted that the QAA had now published the following subject benchmark statements:

[Accounting](#) (Bachelors with honours programmes)

[Finance](#) (Bachelors with honours programmes)

[Computing](#) (Bachelors with honours programmes)

**21. BIS Select Committee Report: The Teaching Excellence Framework: Assessing quality in Higher Education**

It was noted that the BIS Select Committee report into the TEF and assessing quality in HE had been published:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmbis/572/572.pdf>

**21.1** It was noted that the Select Committee found that, while there was broad support from universities for the principles of the TEF, there were widespread concerns about how well metrics might work in practice. The Select Committee had heard concerns about metrics including the suggestion that improved scores could be achieved by making courses less demanding or by reducing the intake of students who were less likely to succeed.

**21.2** It was noted that the Select Committee had looked at the proposed link between TEF and the ability for universities to increase their tuition fees. The Select Committee had agreed the proposals for the first iteration of the TEF (TEF 1) were helpful to ensuring minimum standards of teaching quality before any tuition fee rises. However, the Select Committee had recommended that the next stage of the TEF (TEF 2) should only be introduced once Government could demonstrate that the metrics to be used had the confidence of students and universities.

**21.3** It was further noted that the TEF 1 rating is due to be announced in time for 2017-18 introduction with the TEF 2 ratings due for 2018-19 introduction.

**22. HEFCE Quality Assurance Update date**

The Committee noted the following update on HEFCE's QA plans as reported to the THE:

*The HEFCE Board considered and agreed the next steps towards implementing revised arrangements for quality assessment in England at its meeting on 3 February. Discussion included an approach to piloting and testing, and plans for a smooth transition from the current system to the new arrangements. The Board also agreed a high-level approach to the procurement of services from other organisations. We continue to undertake more detailed design work in collaboration with the other UK funding bodies, Government, and with the sector and student representative bodies. We expect to publish our 'next steps' later in the spring.*

**23. The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) report: Designing Teaching Excellence Framework: Lessons from Other Sectors**

The Committee noted that HEPI had published a paper exploring the experience of ratings in other education and care markets, calling on the

Government to heed the lessons from them in developing the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

<http://www.hepi.ac.uk/2016/02/25/designing-a-teaching-excellence-framework-lessons-from-other-sectors-2/>

**24. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**25. Dates of Meetings 2015-6**

17<sup>th</sup> May 2016, 10:00 – 12:00, Drawing Room, 170 Queens Gate – papers by 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016

19<sup>th</sup> July 2016, 10:00 – 12:00, Faculty Boardroom, Level 4, Faculty Building – papers by 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016

**26. RESERVED AREA OF BUSINESS**

There was no reserved business.